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Appendix I: Topic Guide for Focus Groups
1. Executive Summary

The West Midlands Hub Education Group commissioned Consulting Inplace to carry out research into the impact of museum and gallery visits on children’s learning.

Four focus groups were conducted with children who attended visits to a museum or gallery over 12 months ago. This research has been framed around the Museums, Libraries and Archive’s (MLA) five Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs).

The figure below summarises the main findings from the research, aligned with the GLOs.

The research found that museums and galleries reinforce learning best when certain things are in place including:

- when children are encouraged to be ‘active’ during their visits
- when there are high quality, charismatic guides
- when children are encouraged to handle artefacts and objects
- when there are follow up activities in the classroom.
2. Acknowledgements

Consulting Inplace and the West Midlands Hub would like to thank the four schools who participated in the research:

- Short Heath Primary School, Erdington, Birmingham
- Birches Green Junior School, Erdington, Birmingham
- West Park Primary School, Wolverhampton
- Holy Rosary Catholic Primary School, Wolverhampton

We would like to thank the Head Teachers, Teachers and Parents for giving their consent for the research and most importantly, the children for speaking so honestly and vibrantly about their experiences.
3. **Introduction and methodology**

This qualitative research project examined the impact of museum visits on children and young people’s learning. This section explains the rationale for the research and the methodology used to conduct the study.

3.1 **Setting the context**

The West Midlands Hub Education Group, which represents five museums in the West Midlands plus the Black Country Living Museum, commissioned Consulting Inplace in October 2010 to carry out research into the impact of museum and gallery visits on children’s learning.

Existing anecdotal evidence suggests that visits to museums and galleries contribute positively to children’s learning. Previous research has focused on teachers’ views of impact using self-completion evaluation forms linked to organised visits to museums. This demonstrated the value that teachers placed on museum education, not only in relation to attainment, but also social and emotional aspects of learning which reinforce the acquisition of knowledge and skills (p.11). The research found that teachers recognised the contribution museums can make to the delivery of ‘Every Child Matters’ outcomes and the role museums can play in developing positive attitudes to learning. The findings also suggest that teachers believe that museum education helps children to interact positively with each other and adults and their ability to be creative and flexible.

While previous research provided useful insights into the role of museums and galleries in education, it was based only on the views of teachers. The research conducted for this report aimed to add depth and richness of evidence through qualitative research with children and young people themselves.

This research has been framed around the Museums, Libraries and Archive’s (MLA) five Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs). These are underpinned by a broad definition of learning which identifies benefits that people gain from interacting with museums, libraries and archives. The five GLOs are:

- Knowledge and understanding
- Skills
- Attitudes and values
- Enjoyment, inspiration, creativity
- Activity, behaviour and progression

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1 The West Midlands Hub is a partnership between five regional museum services: they are Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery; Coventry Arts and Heritage Service; Ironbridge; Stoke-on-Trent Museums and Wolverhampton Arts and Museums
2 West Midlands Regional Museums Hub, Evaluation of the Renaissance in the Regions Learning Programmes 04 – 10 at Hub Museums using the Generic Learning and Social Outcomes
3 Initiative set up in 2003 to ensure that every child has the support they need be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, achieve economic wellbeing
3.2 Methodology

Schools within the areas of interest (central Birmingham and Wolverhampton) who had visited a museum or gallery within the necessary timescale (i.e. 12-18 months prior) were invited to take part in the research. Given the timescales for completing the research, those who responded first were selected to participate. Teachers at the selected schools were invited to select 6 students for the research focus groups – 3 girls and 3 boys with a mixture of academic abilities.

Four focus groups were conducted with children who attended visits to a museum or gallery over 12 months ago (Figure 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locality</th>
<th>School year visit took place</th>
<th>School year focus group took place</th>
<th>Museum/gallery visited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Erdington</td>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>Year 6</td>
<td>Birmingham Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erdington</td>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>Birmingham Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolverhampton</td>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>Black Country Living Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolverhampton</td>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>Year 6</td>
<td>Wolverhampton Art Gallery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Topic Guide was designed to include prompts for the focus group discussions and was structured around the five MLA Generic Learning Outcomes. The Topic Guide was used to prompt the discussion and is a flexible tool, rather than a script. A copy of this can be found in Appendix 1.

In total, 24 children were involved in the focus group discussions. The focus groups were analysed collectively and the findings in this report represent the dominant findings, using illustrative examples where appropriate.

It should be noted that this research, while yielding rich qualitative data, is based on a relatively small sample of children. This research does not aim to be statistically significant nor provide evidence for all museum/gallery visits. Rather, the research has been designed to both add to the evidence base and provide a starting point for further qualitative research into the impact of West Midlands museums.

The remainder of the report is organised around the 5 GLOs, using illustrative examples from the focus group sessions to evidence our findings.
4. Knowledge and understanding

The Knowledge and Understanding Generic Learning Outcome refers to participants’ knowledge, learning facts or information, making sense of something, deepening understanding, how museums, libraries and archives operate, making links and relationships between things. This section outlines the contributions to this outcome.

4.1 Visits contribute to a deeper understanding of subject areas

Most children reported that museum and gallery visits improved knowledge and understanding of specific subjects areas. In some cases, this was improved indirectly, learning about history, through a visit to an art gallery, for example. It was evident that museum and gallery visits have the ability to excite and enthuse children about particular subjects.

- Several Year 6 children indicated a deeper understanding of the definition of art ‘you can make anything if its art’ and ‘you can make anything out of anything – art is not just about drawing but it can be about painting or sculpture’

- One Year 6 girl reported that the visit helped with her drawing a lot but also helped with history, literature and religious education – for example ‘not knowing that Jesus had a feast, but then you’d see the picture and see that he did.’

4.2 Visits helped to bring school projects ‘to life’

Children were asked to comment on the extent to which the visits helped them directly with their school work. There is clear evidence that their experience in galleries and museums has been transferred into school projects, particularly those focused on history, the subject around which visits are often organised.

- One group mentioned the things they had learnt about schools in the Victorian times, about what Victorians used to eat, and what was stocked in shops. This knowledge was used in the Victorian project they were carrying out in school that term.

- One pupil stated they were now ‘better at reading information books’ since the museums visit– this same boy said that there was a book on Ancient Greece in his classroom and since the museum visit he has been reading it (learning about spears), and he read it ‘just ‘coz I wanted to’

- There are several examples of how visits to exhibits have been brought to life through games and physical activity. These are described in more detail in section 5.2
4.3 Visits support knowledge retention

The participants were able to vividly describe their visits to museums and galleries. The specificity and vibrancy of the knowledge retained is particularly notable. In all four focus groups the participants were each able to remember at least one specific fact.

- Those who visited Birmingham Museum were able to recall specific stories from Ancient Greece, such as how slingshots were used to hit horse’s legs so that people fell off, and how ‘nasty messages’ were put in slingshots, and they even remembered one of the messages - ‘have a dead birthday’, and how Athens went to war with Sparta and that Sparta won.

- Overall, the visits contributed to a greater understanding of what it was like to live as Greeks did, with many anecdotes (such as a soldier being killed by his own catapult bullet) commonly remembered by the group. Back at school, the children participated in a ‘Greek day’ where they explored some of these aspects, including Greek sports, and this helped them make links between their own lives and ancient Greeks. Many of the children knew about specific historic events in some detail, such as what events were in the original Olympics. ‘Relay races started out as messengers taking messages around Greece...I never knew that before’.

- A significant level of detail was retained. When asked what had been remembered one group who visited Black Country Living Museum replied ‘that ponies were used in mines instead of horses because horses were too tall... the height level was 1 metre for the ponies’
5. **Skills**

The Skills GLO refers to knowing how to do something; being able to do new things; intellectual skills; information management skills; social skills; communication skills; physical skills

5.1 **New skills are specific to the exhibit visited**

Children reported improved skills in relation to the exhibit they visited and the activities they took part in. The recognition of improved skills were very much linked to activities and exercises. For example, for those who visited Art Galleries and took part in activities, they reported improved drawing skills. Some children mentioned improved maths and literacy as a result of specific exercises they took part in during their visits

- The group who visited Wolverhampton Art Gallery learnt how to use ‘art straws’ to make different shapes. Also the visit ‘taught me how to take drawing a step further...I know how to draw a face and where the eyes should go’.

- When asked if they had become better at certain subjects, such as maths, the children recalled specific exercises, such as using a timeline to count backwards in order to work out dates BC. Of those who took part in this exercise, most thought that this had helped them to improve maths skills.

- The group who visited the Ancient Greece exhibition mentioned their improved sports skills such as jumping using a weight.

- Some children stated that they had learned new words from their visit to the Ancient Greece exhibit.

5.2 **Physical activities help to embed skills and retain knowledge**

As stated above, children were able to remember skills specific to the exhibit visited. Our research found that when the activities were physical, there was a vivid description of the activity indicating improved retention. The freedom of being allowed to walk around the museum was welcomed.

- Two groups took part in PE-based activities during and after their visit to the Ancient Greece exhibit based on what they learned about the Olympics. For example, they used hula hoops as a discus, used javelins as spears. These activities were described vividly.
Some children stated the importance of movement. ‘At school we just sit there and [at the museum] we can run around’. Another child recalled opportunities to ‘run around and play tig...its better than sitting still’. This indicated that the children enjoyed themselves and as a result remember what has been learned.

The previously mentioned activity at the Black Country Museum where children visited the coalmine involved them moving around rather then being sat down and told about it. They all remembered things they had learnt about the mine and this was all of the children’s favourite and most memorable parts of the visit.

5.3 Improved communication and social skills

Many of the children strongly agreed that they had become better at talking to friends about their ideas – this came from them working together during the visits and activities. Some strongly agreed that they had become better at talking to adults about their ideas and it was stated that entering the museum ‘made me feel like a grown up’

One girl stated that her enthusiasm from the visits meant that she went home and talked to her family about what she had seen and her ideas about it.

5.4 Examples of cross-curricular learning and skills

In addition to the links with PE mentioned above, the visits also improved children’s understanding of the world around them. For example, improving understanding of the ways in which art can commentate on history. Several children used the internet when they returned to the classroom or when they returned home to do further research and reported improved ICT skills.
6. **Attitudes and values**

The Attitudes and Values GLO refers to feelings, perceptions, self-esteem, opinions and attitudes towards other people, increased capacity for tolerance, empathy, increased motivation, attitudes towards an organisation and positive and negative attitudes in relation to an experience.

6.1 **Visits contribute to improved confidence**

Most of the children strongly agreed that they felt more confident about what they could achieve as a result of their visit to the museum or gallery. The youngest of the children consulted were the only ones to be unsure over whether the visit had made them more confident.

- In the case of the children visiting Wolverhampton Art Gallery this increased confidence was linked to skills they had learnt and developed during their visit. One pupil recalled how people had said his drawings were good prior to the gallery visit but he didn’t believe them, but after the visit he felt more confident in his own abilities and accepted their praise, allowing them to boost his confidence further.

- Other pupils reported being more confident in their ability to draw, with one pupil stating that he wasn’t good at drawing before, now he was almost as good as the girl considered to be the best artist in the school.

- One pupil that had visited the Art Gallery said it had helped ‘to have confidence and faith in yourself’. The other children in the group agreed and said they should have confidence in their drawing skills, however one boy said that this lesson was true no matter what the subject or topic, and that he had learnt to have more confidence and faith in himself generally.

- The most enjoyable and memorable part of the visit to the Black Country Living Museum was the visit down the coalmine. Most of the children said that it was ‘scary’ (one boy said he was really scared because he was claustrophobic) but all of them managed to achieve it and as a result increased their confidence in themselves through doing something different that was a challenge for them.

6.2 **Visits encourage children to interact with other children outside of their friendship group and with adults**

Some of the participants reported that they interacted with other children from outside their friendship groups while on school visits. In all cases they were put into groups during their visits by their teachers, and although most were put with friends, many reported the opportunity to interact with other children they may not normally speak to. They also had a chance to interact with adults other than teachers.

- The children visiting the Art Gallery were joined by pupils from other schools, which they said was ‘ok’ with them. As a result most of these children agreed that they
spoke to new people when they visited the gallery, with one boy reporting that he made a new friend.

- Most children who took part in the Ancient Greece teaching session at Birmingham Museum said that they spoke to the museum educator taking the visit, particularly the younger children.

6.3 **Visits change attitudes and perceptions towards museums and galleries**

Most of the children strongly agreed that the museum or gallery had surprised them. A large number of them had been to museums and galleries before, whether with family or school, therefore most already had perceptions about what this visit was going to be like. A number of children also agreed that the museum was more interesting than they thought it would be. The visit to just one museum or gallery can change perceptions about museums and galleries as a whole, with several pupils saying that they found this visit interesting and that they would actually ‘give other museums a chance’

- All children visiting the Black Country Living Museum were surprised by the visit. Some were surprised by certain parts of the visit, with one pupil saying ‘the [coal] mine was darker than I thought, and smaller’ whereas others were just surprised in general by how many things were at the museum, and how big it was. All agreed that the museum was more interesting than they thought, as before they had ‘expected it to be boring, but actually it was interesting’

- Children who attended the Ancient Greece teaching session were particularly surprised, as although a number of them had been to this museum or others before, they were surprised at the activities they got to do on this visit. One pupil said ‘I had been before and it was boring, as you just looked at them (the objects) but [this time] you could hold them’.

- Another pupil from a different school agreed, saying ‘usually museums get boring when you look at the same things over and over, it was good that we got to hold things’. Being able to touch the artefacts was a pleasant surprise for all pupils. As a result most children also said that the museum was more interesting than they had expected.

- These visits also show that barriers to visiting museums can be broken down such as the perception of who visits museums. One boy said he ‘felt like an old man’ when he visited the museum, as this is who he believes usually goes to museums. These visits showed that museums and galleries are not just for older people, they can be fun and interesting for people of all ages.
6.4 Visits change attitudes towards learning

The visits encouraged children to see learning as something that doesn’t just take place in school, and that learning can be fun. In some cases the visits also changed perceptions about certain subjects. There was also evidence of an increased desire for learning, in particular to the subjects related to their visit.

- There was a level of surprise among some of the children that they could actually learn whilst having fun, as usually learning is something they most likely associate with sitting in a classroom doing lesson tasks such as reading and writing. One pupil commented on how she realised as a result of the visit that you could ‘learn in different ways’.

- Some of the children that attended the Ancient Greece teaching session said that before the visits they hadn’t really liked history but following the museum visit they realised they liked history and ‘wanted to find out more’. Others didn’t dislike history before, but they hadn’t thought of it as a fun subject; the visit changed their attitude towards the subject, including one pupil that said ‘I changed my mind about museums... [and found out]... history was interesting’.

- One girl in particular showed an increased desire for learning, stating ‘before I went I was a bit interested in history, but I am more interested now’
7. **Enjoyment, inspiration, creativity**

The Enjoyment, Inspiration, Creativity GLO refers to having fun, being surprised, innovative thoughts, creativity, being inspired and exploration, experimentation and making.

7.1 **Engaging staff contribute significantly to enjoyment**

One aspect of the visits that had clearly had an impact of the children was the museum educator taking the visits. In most cases the children could remember the name of the museum educator, even though the visits may have taken place over a year ago. The way in which the guides engaged with the children significantly contributed to the fun that children had during the visit, as well as a lot of the learning that took place.

- When a group of children who had visited Birmingham Museum were asked what the most fun thing at the museum was a number of them recalled stories that the museum educator Pete, or Mr Ray) had told them. They clearly found his stories very funny and enjoyed hearing them; this was reflected in the level of detail they were able to recount about his stories. Once they began talking about the stories he had told them they were able to recount more and more things they had learnt from him (such as the story of messages being put into slingshots and the fact that Sparta and Athens went to war with each other and Sparta won). This suggests evidence of the power of association in learning, the fact that the museum educator was memorable to them made the stories he told them and knowledge he provided them with memorable. Pete Ray, who has just retired, was a qualified teacher, with particular expertise built up over 24 years in the service. This indicates that qualified, experienced museum educators contribute significantly to the experience of museums and galleries.

- All children that attended Birmingham Museum were able to name the museum educator and all said that they found his stories very funny. It came across that the museum educator was skilled at telling stories in a way that he knew would capture the imagination of the children and make the visit memorable for them.

- The museum educator also provided a role model figure for the children in the case where they could see work that he had achieved. The children that visited Wolverhampton Art Gallery were able to name the museum educator (Adrian) and all had looked him up on the internet as they knew he was an artist and they had seen his website. Whilst talking about inspiration and when asked what inspired the children, one girl, who showed an increased interest in art following the visit, said ‘Adrian was an inspiration. His paintings used shading, lots of different colours, the direction he was sat in, the way the light was on his face, he was very good’.

7.2 **Mixed views on the extent to which museums/galleries are inspiring**

Some of the children reported that they found their visit inspiring, although not all of them agreed. Some areas of inspiration related to specific skills such as drawing, whilst others were inspired to learn more about the subject they had covered during their visit.
Children reported being inspired to find out more following their visit. One girl who had attended the Ancient Greece teaching session said ‘I wanted to know more because I am interested in history I thought I would learn everything at the museum but [following the visit] I wanted to know more’.

Some reported that they were inspired to do other activities relating to history, such as ‘watching Horrible Histories’. One boy then followed up by saying ‘but if Horrible Histories wasn’t on I could get the book and read about it’.

Some of the children were inspired by their visit to the art gallery to ‘do different things with art, experience different things’. When asked how they had been inspired by their visit to the art gallery one girl stated ‘I used to want to be different things, now I like the idea of being an artist’. The visit also inspired them to want to find out more about art, such as ‘how to draw different pictures, different types of pictures’ and even ‘how to draw the melting clocks’.

7.3 Museums/galleries are exciting, interesting places

The level of detail in which the children could describe the actual building of the museum or gallery gives an indication of what exciting and interesting places these are for children. The children very rarely reported being bored.

The children that visited the Wolverhampton Art Gallery were all able to describe the building and they things they saw as they walked through it - ‘we went in and saw this statue, then turned left into a room that had this painting, then went into next room where we saw this’. None of them were bored during the visit, with one pupil saying ‘[it was] not boring at all, every single moment was fun or involved something’.

Most of the children strongly agreed that they were interested and excited by what they saw and did at the museum. This was evidenced by the fact that the children would start to talk over one another and louder than each other about their favourite parts, and that they would often change their minds when asked what their favourite thing about the museum or gallery visit was.

The only times children reported being bored was when they had to wait around. This was usually on the journey there or on the way back, but one boy said it was a bit boring when they had to look at certain pictures for a set time whilst another boy said it could get a bit boring waiting to be handed the artefacts, as that took a while.

7.4 Museums/galleries are enjoyable and stimulate the imagination

When asked how the museum made them feel, many of the children used words such as ‘excited’, ‘funny’ and ‘happy’. ‘Excited’ was the most common word used, reinforced by the fact that all of the children enjoyed their visit and almost all said that they had laughed at the museum or gallery exhibit.
Things that the children found the most fun to do were holding the artefacts, dressing up, pretending to throw a slingshot and generally getting to do activities.

When asked how the visit made her feel one girl who had visited the Art Gallery used the word ‘adventuristic’. Another girl said that seeing some of the paintings made her feel ‘happy’, whilst one boy described the visit as ‘it was fun, I liked it so much’.

The visit had clearly stimulated the imagination of many of the children, particularly the boys, with one boy saying he felt like an Ancient Greek and was ‘daydreaming about wearing armour and stuff’.
8. **Activity, behaviour and progression**

The Activity, Behaviour and Progression GLO refers to what people do; what people intend to do; what people have done; reported or observed actions; and a change in the way people manage their lives.

8.1 **Most children intend to visit again**

Regardless of which museum or gallery they went to, most children said that they intended to go again. Some had been since their visit with school, most of them going with family members. The enthusiasm to go again also extended to other museums, with many children saying they would like to visit other museums, with some being able to name which ones they wanted to go to.

- Most said that they would like to visit the museum or gallery that they went to again, with one pupil that visited the Wolverhampton Art Gallery saying ‘you can find more and more questions to ask each time we go, as we get more interested in Art’ and another saying ‘its still interesting to go again and again – they change the paintings’.

- Some children were interested in the topics as they wanted to go to ‘more history ones – Romans and WWII’ – these were related to subjects that they were doing in history at the time of the research.

- Many of the children agreed that they would like to go to other museums or galleries, from local museums such as the Black Country Living Museum to the Natural History Museum in London.

8.2 **The classroom activities after the visit have a significant role to play in embedding learning**

Most of the children took part in classroom activities relating to their visit to the museum or gallery. Carrying out these activities cemented the knowledge that the children had gained by linking the visit to school work, so that the visit was not just seen as a day off from school.

- Some of the children that visited the Black Country Living Museum said that the visit gave them lots of ideas for things they could do in the Victorian project that they were undertaking that term.

- All of the children that attended an Ancient Greece teaching session took part in some classroom activities. For some this involved writing about what they had seen or done or drawing the objects that they handled, others were filmed by their teacher talking about the museum visit – these children said that doing this helped them to remember the visit.

- Another pupil mentioned that the teacher gave them some books on Ancient Greece and then they went to the ICT room and looked up information on the internet.

- The internet was a useful tool in cementing knowledge that the children had gained during their visit and providing an opportunity for the children to investigate things they had found interesting further, such as looking up more information on Ancient
Greece or in the case of those visiting the Art Gallery searching for more examples of ‘Pop Art’ and finding the work done by their museum educator on his website.

- Follow up work did not just take place in school though. One girl reported that she kept a museum diary in which she wrote down what she had learnt or found interesting every time she visited a museum, regardless of whether she went with school or family. This also helped to embed the knowledge that she had gained.

### 8.3 Most children talk to their families about their visits

Most children had spoken to their families about their visit. In general they had all spoken to their families because they wanted to share their experiences and new found knowledge with them, not just because their families asked them.

- Things that children who had visited the Black Country Living Museum told their families were ‘everything I had learnt’, ‘everything I found interesting’ and one pupil who had ‘I told them everything I had learnt because they were interested’.

- As well as telling their families about what they had learnt, children also told their families about memorable parts and experiences of the day, in particular children that had taken part in the Ancient Greece teaching sessions told their families about ‘the funny man’ referring to the museum educator, and several others agreed that they told their families some of his ‘funny stories’.

- Children not only told their families about their visits, in some cases they showed them work they had done during the visit. Some of the children who visited the Art Gallery showed their parents the drawings they had done during the day.

- One girl chose to write about her visit and gave the written work to her mum.

### 8.4 Visits including physical activity are most popular and memorable

When asked for their most memorable moment of the visits, the children generally said activities that involved them doing something active, such as moving around or holding and feeling objects.

- All of the children that visited the Black Country Living Museum said that their most memorable and fun part of the visit was when they went down into the coalmine. The fact that the situation was brought to life made it fun for them, with one boy saying ‘it was fun ‘coz it was all around us’. Although they said it was scary, this seemed to contribute to the enjoyment of the activity.

- Children who attended the Ancient Greece teaching session remembered and enjoyed handling the artefacts most, along with other activities such as dressing up (one of the children said the
best things about museums was the dressing up – ‘you feel like you are there’). The children said that the museum was exciting because they had ‘never got to touch things before at a museum’, and this was something they liked doing.

- Even doing things that didn’t involve much physical activity, such as drawing, were also seen as being more enjoyable than just observing – looking at paintings could be fun because ‘you can copy the drawings’.

8.5 Visits provide resources that schools can’t (or at least would struggle to)

Visits to museums or galleries can offer something that most schools can’t in terms of resources such as historical objects and artefacts. Although for most children any trip out of school would be seen as fun because they don’t have to be in school, the children all gained something out of their visit and didn’t just see it as a distraction from the normal school day.

- When asked how the Black Country Living Museum was different to school one boy commented ‘it was interesting, there were lots of artefacts’. One of the best things about museums was seen to be that ‘they give you more interesting things than schools do’. It was also said how being at the museum brought things to life, with one boy saying ‘it was like we had gone through a time warp, it was really realistic’. As this boy also said, it was ‘a once in a lifetime experience’ for them.

- Museum and gallery visits provide an opportunity for children to see in more detail things they learn about in school (‘at school you have to imagine it, but [in a museum] you can see stuff how it really was’) – the visits enhance the learning that takes place in school. The importance of not only being able to see the objects as they would in school, in a book or on television, but also handle them was highlighted – ‘at school its boring coz they just put pictures up. [Museum] is better than watching it on TV’.

- There were mixed views over whether the children learnt more at the Art Gallery or in school. Some felt that the gallery was better because of more freedom - ‘you can spend as long as you want on one picture’, however others felt that school offered more variety.

- However, going to the Art Gallery with school was seen as better than going with family as ‘we have more information given to us when we go with school’ and ‘[it is] more fun with the school, more places to go’.
9. Conclusions and learning points

The report has outlined the impacts on children who have visited museums and galleries based on the MLA’s five Generic Learning Outcomes. This section summarises the main impacts.

9.1 What are the impacts of school visits?

This section brings together the strongest messages emerging from the research. These messages were consistent and recurring amongst all groups.

- **School visits contribute to changes in attitudes and perceptions towards museums and galleries** – all groups were surprised by the museum or gallery and found it more interesting then they thought it was going to be. Many were surprised to have enjoyed their visit and many reflected that learning “can actually be quite fun!”

- **Museums and galleries contribute to learning and skills, bringing learning to life** – there is significant evidence to suggest that museum and galleries contribute significantly to the learning experience and embed learning and skills. This is due to the activities involved in the visits and the ability of museums and galleries to “bring history to life”. Children are often encouraged to handle artefacts and objects and they report that this contributes to their overall experience of museums and galleries. While the GLO, Enjoyment Inspiration, Creativity, is seemingly where much of the impact lies, increased levels of enjoyment can lead to increased learning outcomes (“it was fun coz it was all around us”)

- **Visits to museums and galleries leave big impression on children** – this research has revealed that museums and galleries have a significant impact on visitors. The details retained are remarkable – the museum educators, the layout, the artefacts, the facts are all recalled vividly and with passion. As one child commented, their visit to the museum was “a once in a lifetime experience”

- **Visits to museums and galleries at a young age are likely to encourage visits outside of school and for in later life** – most of the children stated that they would like to visit the museum and/or gallery again. Almost all talked to their parents and siblings about their visit. This indicates that a successful school visit can impact upon the way in which children respond to museums and galleries later on in life.

- **Museums and galleries reinforce learning best when** certain things are in place. Notably, when children are encouraged to be ‘active’ during their visits, when there are high quality, charismatic guides, and when there are follow up activities in the classroom.
9.2 Recommendations for further research

It is important to note that this research is based on a modest sample of 24 children. It is recommended that further research is conducted to add depth and insight. Some of key research questions may include:

- Do children/young people of different ages have a different experience?
- Is there a different experience in a museum than in a gallery?
- How does the West Midlands experience compare to the national experience?
- What happens when a visit is unsuccessful?
APPENDIX I

Topic Guide for Focus Groups
9.3 Generic Learning Outcomes

The Generic Learning Outcomes identifies benefits that people gain from interacting with museums, libraries and archives. This topic guide is driven by the Generic Learning Outcomes.
9.4 Pro forma

It is important to recognise that this is a guide for the focus group discussion. The facilitator will be able to guide the discussion and will ask relevant questions using language appropriate to the age group. The ice-breaker question will give the facilitator an indication of which generic learning outcomes to focus on. The questions in bold are considered to be of central importance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Knowledge and Understanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-10</td>
<td>Introduction and Ice breaker</td>
<td>Do you remember going here?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What was the one strongest memory of that visit – either positive or negative?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>How did it make you feel?</td>
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<td>Show pictures of the museum or gallery [e.g. Birmingham Museum] Hold up each picture.</td>
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<td>10-20</td>
<td>Opinion lines</td>
<td>I learn new things when I go to a museum/gallery</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I gained knowledge that I have used in my school work as a result of my visit(s) here</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I have learnt new things about myself</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I have learnt new things about my family</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>What did you learn when you went to the museum/gallery?</td>
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<td>Did it help you with your school work? How?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lead a group discussion on the questions. You could also use the opinion lines as a prompt and follow up with these questions as they are still in a line.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Time | Activity | Questions | GLO
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20-25 | Discussion | What new things have you found out how to do in museums/galleries? | Skills

#### Opinion Lines
- I have become better at maths from museum/gallery visits
- I have become better at reading from museum/gallery visits
- I have become better at writing from museum/gallery visits
- I have become better at talking to friends about my ideas from museum/gallery visits
- I have become better at talking to adults about my ideas from museum/gallery visits

25-35 | Opinion Lines | The museum/gallery surprised me
I learnt things that made me change my mind about something
I am more confident about what I can do / achieve
Museums/galleries are more interesting than I thought
The visit has given me lots to think about | Attitudes and values

#### Discussion
Has a museum/gallery visit ever changed you mind about something?
What difference do you think visiting/taking part has made to you?
How did it feel when you visited the museum/gallery?
Who did you hang out with at the museum? (e.g. friends, other children in the class, teachers, museum staff?)

35-45 | Discussion | What has been most fun about museums/galleries?
Who do you remember from your museums/galleries visit?
What do you remember about them? | Enjoyment

#### Opinion Lines
I was interested in what I saw and did

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CONSULTING INPLACE
### Impact of School Visits on Attitudes to Learning and Attainment – Final Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>GLO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I found my visit inspiring</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>I was excited by what I saw and / or what I did</td>
<td>GLO</td>
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<td>I felt bored by the museum exhibit/gallery</td>
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<td>I have laughed at a museum exhibit/gallery</td>
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<tr>
<td>45–55</td>
<td>Opinion Lines</td>
<td><strong>I intend to go again</strong></td>
<td>Activity behaviour and progression</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Visiting gave me lots of ideas for things I could do</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>The visit made me want to find out more</td>
<td>GLO</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td><strong>Have you talked to your friends or parents or siblings about the museum? What did you tell them?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Would you go again? Would you go to another museum/gallery? Which ones?</strong></td>
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<td>How was this visit been different to learning at school? Do you behave differently in museums to the way that you normally behave at school? In what way?</td>
<td>GLO</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Did you talk or think about the visits afterwards?</td>
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<tr>
<td>55–60</td>
<td>Context and wrap up questions</td>
<td><strong>Have you been to a museum/gallery before your school visit?</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Have you been to a museum/gallery since?</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Can you name/remember/think of any galleries/museums near to where you live?</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<td><strong>What is the best thing about museums/galleries?</strong></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Communities
- Economies
- Skills
- Enterprise