

Committee(s)	Dated:
Education Board	20 October 2022
Subject: Culture Mile Learning – School Visits Fund	Public
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Summary

This paper provides the quarterly update information on the Schools Visits Fund that Culture Mile Learning (CML) was asked to provide as a condition of its funding for 2022/23. It includes data on uptake of the fund and the actions CML is taking to promote the fund.

Main Report

1) Applications

Data is provided by month from the date of our previous report.

- June 13 – June 30: 14 applications were made, set to benefit 477 children
- July: 16 applications were made, set to benefit 613 children
- August: 24 applications were made, set to benefit 821 children
- September: 19 applications were made, set to benefit 697 children

This takes the total number of applications for this financial year to 140. These applications were made by 77 different schools or youth groups with an average Pupil Premium level of 48%.

Two applications were not approved during this period as both schools did not meet the Pupil Premium requirement of the fund (i.e. at least 35% of pupils at the school should be eligible for Pupil Premium).

Overall this quarter, applications were made to visit 15 different cultural venues supported by the City and within the Culture Mile Learning network.

Patterns of note:

- Natural Environment sites (previously called Open Spaces) continued to be the most popular request for visits during this quarter. This is likely due to ideal weather conditions during the summer months as well as the benefit of ‘hands on learning sessions’ and working in ‘areas with a STEM focus’, as stated by teachers.

- Applications reduced in July, but saw a steady increase in August and through to September as teachers returned to school, with the majority of visits booked in August and September scheduled to take place in autumn 2022.
- Other venues attracting significant attention this quarter were the Museum of London and Museum of London Docklands, with their offer for self-led visits.
- Teachers have communicated a notable increase in confidence from parents who support schools using the fund for private travel (as opposed to public transport) as a safety precaution in light of the pandemic. We however will continue to point schools to free Transport for London offers so that the fund can be prioritised for other purposes and stretches as far as possible. Schools continue to mention how the fund and the visits it enables help support Covid recovery for pupils who have experienced significant financial hardship and a lack of access to environments other than school and home over the last two years.
- The most common reason for of applying for funding in this quarter has been to cover transport costs and admission fees to venues (including workshop charges).

2) Grants paid out

25 grants have been paid out in this period totalling £6,936, taking the total number of grants this financial year to 35 and the combined amount awarded to £10,787. The number of grants paid out is different to the number of applications received, because schools are paid after they have made their visits, not on approval of their applications, and the majority of the visits that are the subject of the 140 applications are due to take place later this term or in the spring term.

3) Evaluation and feedback

Feedback forms completed by grantees show the value of the Schools Visits Fund to schools and their pupils and also the ease of the application process.

- The visit increased young people's confidence and motivation
56% of teachers 'strongly agree' and 44% 'agree'
- The young people learnt something new as a result of the visit
78% of teachers 'strongly agree' and 22% 'agree'
- The young people were engaged and enjoyed the visit
56% of teachers 'strongly agree' and 44% 'agree'
- The visit supported our objectives and/or curriculum
56% of teachers 'strongly agree' and 44% 'agree'
- The visit helped develop young people's communication, thinking, organisational, or creative skills:

56% of teachers 'strongly agree' and 44% 'agree'

- Ease of applying
40% of teachers found the application process 'very easy', 40% 'fairly easy' and 20% 'neither easy nor difficult'

'The Fund has been extremely useful to us as we simply could not have afforded to run this trip at a cost to the school and most of our parents would not be able to afford such a trip. We have limited staff availability for trips and rely heavily on parents and volunteers to assist us. It is nice to know that if we really needed to, we could use supply/agency staff and get the cost refunded to us...A really excellent and valuable resource for all schools!'

'We would not have been able to go without it - thank you so much.'

'Students' learning experiences and cultural capital were enhanced significantly by the trip. The itinerary included a walk through the Barbican and visits to the Museum of London and the Roman Amphitheatre under the Guildhall Art Gallery.'

'The trip supported our curriculum objectives; students were able to enhance their knowledge of Roman culture and gain a much better understanding of the development of London from its Roman foundations. However, the trip provided so much more; incidental but very worthwhile topics explored included town planning and urban living, ancient and modern architecture and the curating of ancient objects. For most, this was the first school trip they had ever been on and the skills that students were able to develop as part of the trip are invaluable.'

'This visit to Epping Forest definitely encouraged the Year 3 children to engage with map reading, direction finding and working in teams.'

'Our children absolutely loved this visit, especially the workshop which was a real treat for them. It gave them a perspective of the city they live in as most of them had never seen the river or Tower of London from Tower Bridge. It brought our history topic to life and the children are now more engaged with London history. The children benefitted from learning to use the Tube, cross busy roads and being out in busy London especially as they haven't done anything like this for a couple of years due to lockdown.'

'This is a fantastic way to support and engage young Londoners. Thank you!'

4) School Visits Fund development

We are taking a two-pronged approach to this:

- targeted marketing to schools with higher needs
- general marketing to all eligible schools.

Targeting marketing to schools with high needs – During the summer we have carried out significant planning to develop access to the fund for schools, including Pupil Referral Units, who have extremely high Pupil Premium rates - ranging from 50% to 87%. We are reaching out to schools within this bracket who either do not currently use the fund or who have only used it sparingly. In total, 16 schools have been contacted across six boroughs - Southwark, Hackney, Lambeth, Tower Hamlets, Newham and Haringey. We selected these boroughs due to them having some of the highest poverty rates in London. Given that the fund is also less used by secondary schools, 10 of the selected schools are secondaries.

We have begun building relationships with these schools through direct contact with teachers, discussing specific partner offers which align to their curriculum/enrichment needs. For example, where a school has communicated that the primary curriculum focus this term is Geography, we have successfully marketed Natural Environment workshop offers as well as Thames Explorer workshops at the Museum of London Docklands. We are finding that this form of targeted marketing and support makes the schools feel confident in their ability to access the fund.

Another key component of this work is further strengthening our relationships with cultural partners. We are actively working with our partners to explore specific programming, events, workshops and self-led offers that relate to the varying school curriculum and enrichment needs. In some cases, bespoke offers can also be provided. This work is also creating another marketing avenue for partners which in turn helps them engage with schools. We are currently developing this work with Keats House, Natural Environments, LSO, London Metropolitan Archives and Guildhall Art Gallery.

General marketing to all eligible schools – Given that due to the pandemic, the fund was largely dormant for two years, we thought it would also be a good time to remind schools about it. We are therefore working with a digital marketing agency with expertise in the education sector on an email campaign in mid-October to promote the fund to all eligible schools in London.

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