

News statement

War Memorials Trust's response to draft National Curriculum



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Status: Immediate release

Starts

War Memorials Trust has serious concerns over the draft National Curriculum for History published by the Department for Education on February 7th 2013.

The key reasons for this concern are that:

1. the new proposals would mean that young people will not be required to learn about the two World Wars, the conflicts which the majority of the UK's war memorials commemorate, until the end of Key Stage 3. The topic of Remembrance, the understanding of which is crucial to fostering young people's wider interest in the World Wars, is not referred to at all in the new curriculum.
2. this will mean that children starting school in September 2014, as the nation begins to commemorate the centenary of World War I, will not be required to learn in detail about the events being marked until 2023, completely missing a unique learning opportunity. Children in Key Stage 2 during the centenary period, who will be aware of commemorative events going on around them, will receive no teaching to help them understand this momentous occasion.
3. the new proposals increase the amount of content to be covered in history lessons with no indication that teaching time will also be increased. With each topic receiving less teaching time there will be no opportunity to develop a deep understanding or to visit heritage sites out of the classroom to enhance this.

War Memorials Trust's Director, Frances Moreton, said: "War Memorials Trust aims to build a greater understanding of our war memorial heritage through our Learning Programme for young people. We believe that the draft proposals will damage the understanding that young people, the future custodians of our war memorials, will have of their war memorial heritage and of the conflicts that resulted in many of the UK's war memorials. The Trust is especially disappointed that a curriculum that is due to become statutory less than a month after the nation marks the centenary of the start of World War I does not make better provision for young people to participate in and learn about such a landmark historical event throughout their education."

War Memorials Trust recognises the importance of young people developing chronological understanding. However it is concerned that teaching history strictly in chronological order is not an effective way to achieve this and will deny younger children, often the most interested and enthusiastic participants in the Trust's Learning Programme, the opportunity to begin to learn about this important historical period early on. It also denies children the chance to revisit the subject, building on their understanding and developing a secure knowledge throughout their educational life.

Ends

Contact

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Notes to editors

1. War Memorials Trust is an independent registered charity. Established in 1997 due to concerns about neglect and vandalism it works to protect and conserve war memorials. It provides advice, information and administers grants schemes that assist the repair and conservation of war memorials across the UK. As a charity the Trust relies on voluntary contributions to undertake its work. Supporters include annual and life members, donors, charitable trusts and corporate contributors.
2. War Memorials Trust's Learning Programme began in August 2011 with the appointment of a Learning Officer. The website www.learnaboutwarmemorials.org launched in July 2012 and was well received, and well-used, in November 2012.
3. War Memorials Trust provides grants that can assist repair and conservation of war memorials. Contact the Conservation Team to discuss eligibility on 020 7233 7356 / 0300 123 0764 or conservation@warmemorials.org or download a 'Pre-application form' from www.warmemorials.org/grants/.
4. War Memorials Trust provides a free advisory service to anyone with a war memorial enquiry. Specialist Conservation Officers are available on 020 7233 7356 / 0300 123 0764 or conservation@warmemorials.org.