

When children spend time in the great outdoors, getting muddy, getting wet, getting stung by nettles, they learn important lessons – what hurts, what is slippery, what you can trip over or fall from.

(Peter Cornall, 2010, Head of Leisure Safety at RoSPA)

Exploring localness involves looking at how people express and experience their differences from others, and what they share with people.

(Smith, 1994: 10)

Learning objectives

By the end of this chapter you should be able to:

- define and evaluate local study in the primary school;
- describe possible historical, geographical and religious starting-points to local study;
- identify the kinds of questions, sources and approaches to consider when planning a local study; and
- reflect on the potential of a street study to promote children's enquiry skills.

What is the locality?

For many teachers, the locality equates to the area around the school, often associated with the expression 'our square mile' and normally containing the homes of the majority of pupils in the school (DCELLS, 2008a: 13). In a strict geographical sense, the locality has been defined as having a radius of less than 2 kilometres (1.2 miles)

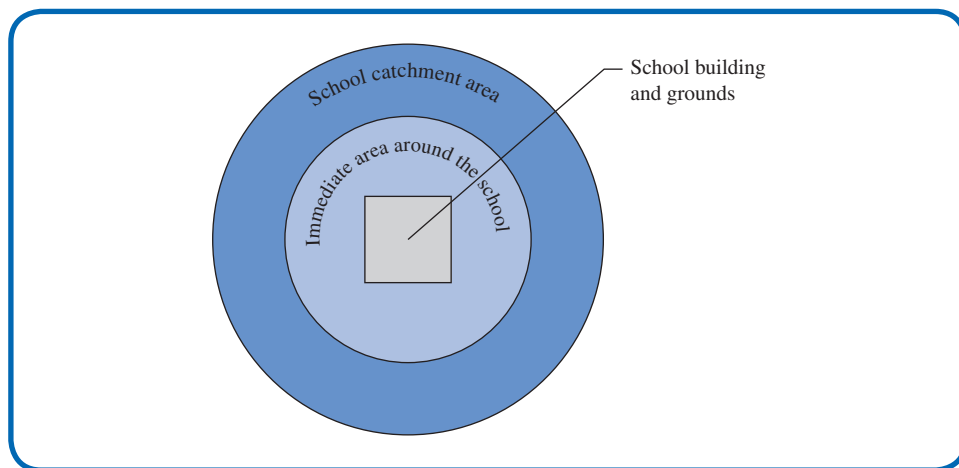


Figure 5.1 Possible scales of local study in the primary school.

and, in the case of urbanised areas, probably containing no more than 10,000 residents (Day, 2006). The locality can be seen as three separate areas covering the school buildings and grounds, the immediate vicinity around the school and the wider neighbourhood (see Figure 5.1). Milner *et al.* (2004) add that teachers should consider more distant features, such as hills, church towers and factories, if they contribute to the character of the locality. The locality can be revisited continually through different geographical 'focal lenses' as children deepen their local knowledge and experience (Catling and Willy, 2009).

Geographically speaking then, the parameters of local study should be limited to a village or part of a town rather than extend to a city or region. Historically, 'local' has proven to be an organic unit reflecting changes in the way in which a community has organised itself. The 'parish' (originally derived from classical Greek, 'neighbour' or 'near house') was the smallest defined area of local government in rural areas served by the church. In England, the parish church dominated village life and remains the oldest building in most localities. For centuries, the church served not only to mark the rites of passage (christenings, weddings and funerals) but also the only means of accessing information about the outside world. Public notices continue to be posted in church porches. Although the parish boundary defined administrative matters, such as the operation of workhouses and schools, it did not restrict movement of people in and out of the parish. Hence there is a strong argument for pupils to consider historical communities in relation to others rather than in isolation (Hey, 1998). Local historians focus on the stories of individual villages and towns, particularly those of 'ordinary people in ordinary places' (Lewis, 1989: 8). The scope of local history is considerable, as demonstrated by the many events that feature as part of the Historical Association's Local and Community History Month (www.history.org.uk/events).

Clifford and King (2006: x) point out that locality needs to be defined from within. They see the neighbourhood, the housing estate, the village, the suburb and the street as areas that have a sense of belonging – definable by those who live, work and play there. They argue that when things are looked at on a larger scale, sensitivity is lost and

abstractions begin – people become ‘the public’, fields become ‘sites’ and woods are viewed as ‘natural resources’.

A sense of belonging involves individuals ‘identifying with a particular place, taking pride in it and having faith in the capacity of local institutions to act fairly and openly’ (DCSF, 2010: 3). Exploring localities is not only about physical features such as churches, castles and parks. It is also a spiritual journey in recognising the emotional investment in places and spaces. Visitors to monasteries and abbeys, such as Mount Grace Priory (north Yorkshire) and Tintern (Monmouthshire), can feel spiritually renewed when they reflect on the silence, solitude and simplicity of monastic life. In some cases, it motivates individuals to simplify their lifestyles in the bustling modern age and has captured the public’s imagination with television programmes such as *The Monastery*, *The Retreat* and *The Convent* (Jamison, 2006). In every locality there will be places considered sacred or holy because they imbue a special feeling in people. Historically, these include ancient stone circles such as Avebury (Wiltshire) and Glastonbury Tor (Somerset), which continue to attract New-Age devotees. There are also landscapes that are regarded for their ‘spiritual’ nature such as the Lake District, Snowdonia and the Giant’s Causeway (County Antrim). In many local areas there are holy wells as testified by place and street names such as ‘Holywell’ (north Wales), Wells (Somerset) and Well Street. In the Middle Ages holy wells were dressed with flowers on their saint’s day. This ancient custom is still celebrated in places such as the Peak District.

REFLECTION

- Think about your own area and where you would find a quiet, sacred place to meditate. How might you encourage children to do the same, for instance in a busy, urban school setting?

Contrasting localities

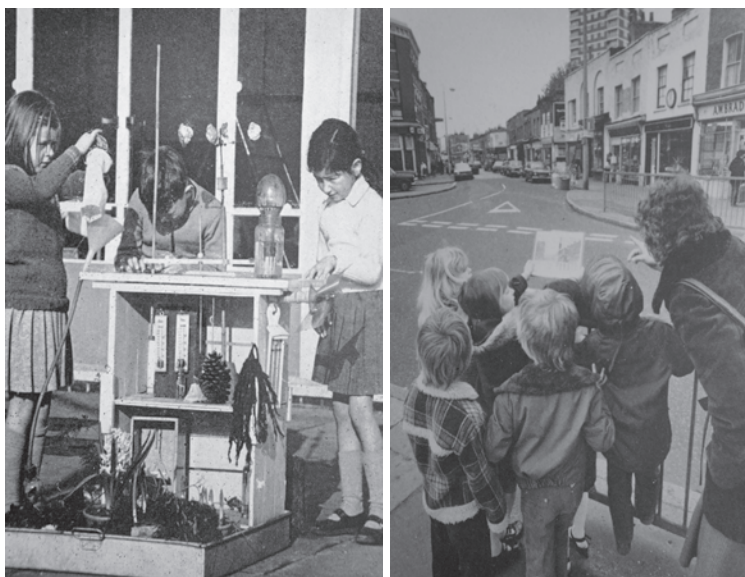
From a geographical perspective, localities should be chosen to allow similarities and contrasts to be drawn between places – for instance, in terms of climate (hot or cold countries), location (rural or urban), and wealth (economically advantaged or less well developed). Within the UK, contrasts might include a seaside town and a suburb, or an inner-city community and a rural village. By establishing links with a school elsewhere in the UK and overseas, pupils can extend their understanding of national and global issues. Scoffham (2002), for instance, illustrates how comparisons can be drawn between a local street and Mengles Road, a side street in Dindigul, a town in southern India. The street’s small textile and fabric workshops, school, training institute, church and international hotel contribute to the character of the area. The thriving street life includes many street vendors and weavers working on the roadside. But Scoffham points out that, as in England, there is a distinct pattern to the day. In the quiet of the early morning, refuse is cleared away, children arrive at school and traffic builds up as lorries, taxis and bicycles make their way through the town. Peace returns later in the day as the heat intensifies.

The value of local study

The value of local study in children's education has long been recognised (see [Photos 5.1–2](#)). The Hadow Report (1931: 102) highlighted the contribution of visits to local places of interest to children's progress in history, geography and nature study. HMI (1959: 291) reinforced this view, even suggesting the need for a second follow-up visit to sites such as woods, ponds and museums, in order to consolidate learning. Projects in the 1970s and 1980s showed how the locality is an ideal context for the development of pupils' motivation, confidence and skills, for instance in collecting data, experimenting, mapping, and examining documents (Harris, 1971; Blyth *et al.*, 1976; Lines and Bolwell, 1971; ILEA, 1980; Pinnell, 1986; Boyle, 1987). The potential of local study and outdoor learning in general has been flagged up through the recent curriculum reviews across the UK. Scotland's *Curriculum for Excellence* (Scottish Executive, 2005), the Northern Ireland Curriculum (DENI, 2006), the Foundation Phase in Wales (DCELLS, 2008b) and the Foundation Stage in England (DfES, 2007) all highlight learning gains associated with local study, particularly for young children.

Literacy, numeracy and ICT skills

The locality provides a powerful stimulus for developing learners' skills in literacy, numeracy, and information and communications technology (ICT). Pupils might



Photos 5.1–2 For many years local study has developed children's mathematical skills (such as measurement, scale and estimation), as shown by these photographs of a children's weather station in the 1960s and a street investigation of the 1980s.

Sources: DES, (1967); ILEA, (1980: 2).

write letters to the local newspaper to express their views on a particular issue such as the closure of a shop, produce labels for a museum exhibition, or compile a guide-book for a local place of worship. Mathematical skills can also be fostered through a wide range of local contexts including visits to shops, historical sites, graveyards, woodlands and farms. Pupils can undertake traffic and other surveys gaining skills in handling data using graphs, charts and diagrams. They can practise measuring and calculating skills using first-hand sources such as census returns. Photographs of different shapes in the environment can be taken, analysed and shared. Pupils can also search out evidence for numbers in the local environment, ranging from bus stops to milestones. Pupils can practise numeracy skills when making timelines of local events. Problem-solving challenges can be set such as working out areas, angles, heights and volumes associated with particular buildings.

Pupils' speaking and listening skills can be promoted through local investigations. Debates can centre on local environmental issues, such as land redevelopment. Children can adopt the role of local reporters covering current issues and make presentations in public meetings and 'televised' debates using digital video cameras. By regularly interviewing local residents, pupils learn to ask questions, listen carefully, show patience, manage equipment and begin to see that there are different perspectives on life. This is not only beneficial to children – as Howarth (1998) points out, 'two-way learning' occurs between interviewer and interviewee. It brings generations together.

Local study offers much scope for developing pupils' skills in ICT. There are a number of software packages that introduce computer mapping and geographical information systems. The Ordnance Survey OpenData is part of the drive to increase innovation, and support the government's 'Making Public Data Public' initiative (www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/products/os-opendata.html).

In walking around the area, pupils can use digital cameras to record their experiences. They can use their images to produce real or 'interactive' postcards, describing the best features of their locality, to send to another school. Databases can be created to log findings and evaluate sources. For instance, Peter Higginbotham's first-rate website on workhouses (www.workhouses.org.uk), replete with 5,000 images, 1,800 maps and 2,500 web pages, is a rich source for local study. The transcribed census returns can easily be transferred to Microsoft Excel and used by pupils to investigate the ages of 'inmates', mapping their birthplaces using online tools and comparing former occupations. They may deduce that some occupations were common to localities, such as lace makers in Tiverton (Devon), cotton-stocking knitters in Mansfield (Nottingham) and ironworkers in Merthyr Tydfil (Glamorgan). Groups of pupils can 'adopt' a different family from a workhouse and set their own questions for others to consider. Ethical issues relating to social exclusion (why were children separated from their parents in the workhouse, and why were workhouses so dreaded?) and 'handicapped' people (idiots, imbeciles, lunatics) provide material for good personal and social education.

Good local study should include frequent outdoor learning. First-hand experiences such as observing, measuring, photographing and interviewing bring the humanities to life. Such active learning has widespread support in the UK curriculum and publishers have been quick to highlight the all-round benefits of learning outdoors (Knight, 2009; Bilton, 2010). The Westminster government acknowledges the value of outdoor

learning through its manifesto for *Learning Outside the Classroom* (LOtC), which pledges support for all pupils to have 'regular, continuous and progressive LOtC experiences' (DfES, 2006).

BOX 5.1 RESEARCH BRIEFING – OUTDOOR LEARNING

The emotional, physical and cognitive benefits associated with working within the 'real' environment have been extensively researched (Rickinson, 2001; Fien *et al.*, 2001; Rickinson *et al.*, 2004; Dillon *et al.*, 2005). For example, the National School Grounds Survey (*Learning through Landscapes* 2003), reports that of 700 schools surveyed 65 per cent believed that school grounds improvements had increased overall attitudes to learning while 73 per cent identified considerable improvements in behaviour, as well as a significant reduction (64 per cent) in bullying. Academic gains were also noted (see www.lotc.org.uk/Resources/Research). Specifically, fieldwork has a positive impact on children's long-term memory because the experiences outside are markedly different, and therefore easier to recall, from everyday classroom life.

Challenges

A recent survey by Ofsted (2008a: 5) attributed limited fieldwork opportunities to concerns over health and safety, lack of curriculum time, a shortage of staff expertise and insufficient finance. Geographically, the locality needs to be compared to other localities, a wider region and the country as a whole. For instance, if a class is studying a car factory in the locality, they could investigate where in the UK the parts come from and which countries receive the finished cars. Many first-hand historical sources are not available in a format that is readily accessible to young children, although county record offices and libraries have produced some excellent materials for schools. For instance, the Hampshire Record Office provides educational packs, online sources and videos on titles such as 'The Home Front in Hampshire', 'A 1930s Infant School' and 'Studying Local History: a guide to useful sources' (www3.hants.gov.uk).

The organisation of visits and fieldwork requires careful planning, including due regard to risk assessment. School and local authorities should have clear guidelines about taking children out of school. If visiting a park or garden, for instance, discarded syringes and hypodermic needles are a particular hazard because of the risk of transmission of disease. Practical provision for hand washing needs to be available, for instance through the use of alcohol gels or other hand sanitizers. Parents should be informed of appropriate clothing and footwear, along with the use of sun creams where necessary. Society's excessive risk aversion has prompted schemes such as Go4it (www.hti.org.uk/products/go4it) to award schools that develop a risk-positive

climate, so that a 'cotton-wool' generation of children learn to manage risks and enjoy the occasional cartwheel or game of conkers. Such activities and experiences, which previous generations of children enjoyed, are now seen as troubling or dangerous (Gill, 2007).

Historical starting points

The school building itself is often a good starting point for local history. Investigations can begin by establishing a timeline drawing upon interviews with ex-pupils, and studying old photographs and plans. Victorian and Edwardian schools often have punishment ledgers and logbooks or diaries, available in the county record office or the school itself. By walking around the school searching out architectural clues from the past, children can develop skills of deduction and inference. They can raise questions about the location of the school and how the area has changed by examining Ordnance Survey maps.

Every school is situated in a locality with its own 'curiosities' or unusual sites of historical interest (Timpson, 1989; Hannigan, 2006). Many fascinating examples are cited by Ashley (2005), such as the 20 regimental badges carved on the downland chalk in Fovant (Wiltshire) to commemorate the soldiers who died in the First World War. In some cases, the regeneration of areas has led to the rediscovery of objects and buildings that hitherto had been ignored.

Place names

The obvious historical starting point for local study is the name of the school, street, village or town. The UK has some intriguing place names including: Lower Slaughter, No place, Pity Me, Sandwich, Great Snoring, Blubberhouses, Bishops Itchington, Piddleshinton and Ugley. Many of the oldest names derived from rural features: trees, streams, gardens, dwellings by rivers. In Gaelic, for instance, *derry* means 'oakwood', *carraig* means 'rock', and *tully* or *knock* means 'hill'. Even the industrial heartland of Birmingham is softened by 'the farm of Beornmund's people'. However, over a period of 1,000 years or so, spellings change and it is not possible to be certain about the meaning of a place – 'Birch Wood' may have meant that only one birch tree was present rather than many.

The influence of Christianity can be traced in place-names. Children can explore the prevalence of *Llan* (Wales), *kirk* (Scotland), *kil* (Ireland) and *Church* or *minster* using Ordnance Survey maps. Less obvious are place names that contain *stow* (Old English), which meant 'meeting place' – frequently these were religious gatherings. Bristol was once *Brycg Stow*, meaning 'the place of assembly by the bridge'. Morwenstow (Cornwall) is named after Morwenna, a local female saint. Other place names are linked to the names of ecclesiastics (priests, monks, canons, bishops, abbots and nuns), or monasteries, religious houses and crosses (Cameron, 1996). Local reference libraries are likely to hold copies of guides on place names (e.g. Reaney, 1960; Gelling, 1997; Owen, 1998) and there are some excellent online sources. A project on names can extend to streets, public houses and other buildings, and utilise sources such as gravestones, trade directories and maps.

Customs

Local study should draw upon stories of events, characters and customs that have shaped the development of the area and illustrate significant themes in history. For instance, Granny Cousins was Poole's famous 'Knocker-up' who used a pole for tapping on upstairs bedroom windows to wake people for the start of the day. She would start at three o'clock in the morning, and was often seen later in the day sleeping around the town.

Such a story raises discussion points relating to the impact of the clock, described as the 'key invention of the Industrial Revolution' and the 'operating system of capitalism', on people's lives (Honoré, 2005: 22). It is the one object that makes everything else possible – such as meetings, deadlines and transport. Persuading early industrial workers to live by the clock was difficult. Punctuality became a priority and a celebrated Victorian virtue while slowness became a cardinal sin. In modern times, the cult of speed has been challenged by those who do not equate speed with quality of life. Many localities feature blue plaques to commemorate the contribution of individuals to 'human welfare or happiness', as advertised by the English Heritage scheme (started in 1867).

Many local customs have charitable origins associated with the distribution of food or drink to the poor. County reference libraries should hold sources on local and national folklore and customs (Owen, 1991; Day, 1998; Bennett, 2007; Ayto and Crofton, 2005). Some traditions are highly controversial in nature, such as the annual burning of the Pope at Lewes (Sussex). Others are in danger of being lost to future generations, such as the folk stories associated with the Fens of the East of England. However, in general, Round (2006) points out that many local authorities are taking an active interest in customs as a means of attracting tourists and celebrating community distinctiveness.

Geographical starting points

The geographical area from which children attend any particular school can vary considerably in nature and size. It is important for teachers to get to know the school's locality, given that many probably live outside it. To state an obvious but important point: going for regular walks around the neighbourhood can reveal many features that go unnoticed from the car.

School grounds

Every school can be seen as a 'little geography' (Carter, 1998: 213) in itself. Most Early Years practitioners will use the classrooms, school building and grounds as starting points for geography, as discussed further in [Chapter 4](#). There is extensive guidance in making effective use of the school grounds (Harriman, 2008; Garick, 2009; Bilton, 2010). Pupils can undertake simple map-making activities, weather watches, land use surveys, direction games and follow sensory walks. The 'old' Qualifications and Curriculum Agency (2002) scheme based on improving the school grounds can be adapted for different ages and contexts (Years 1 to 6). For instance, a small-scale project might focus on improving one aspect of the school site such as putting in

new plants and containers, or a more ambitious scheme, for example redesigning the school playground. These opportunities enable learners to work together in planning, developing and reviewing their ideas. They can apply mathematical skills by investigating costs and limitations of different plans.

Immediate neighbourhood

Moving from the school grounds, pupils should learn about their neighbourhood's physical, environmental and human features, such as the layout of streets, noise pollution and the kind of work people do. Appropriate fieldwork experiences include: mapping where children live, surveying how children travel to school, and identifying individual buildings on local photographs. It is critical that young children learn how to look around and pursue their own lines of enquiry relevant to their everyday lives (see Figure 5.2).

It can be rewarding to focus on a particular issue, such as the challenges facing wheelchair-users, parents with buggies or the partially sighted, when moving around a shopping precinct, rather than doing a general study of shops. Catling and Willy (2009) suggest a range of local problems to examine including:

- changes to local services such as the closure of a post office;
- examining conflicting views on issues such as parking; and
- exploring different people's use of local services such as leisure facilities.

Table 5.1 expands upon this and highlights the major aspects of local geography in the primary school. Pupils need to understand that adults do different kinds of work, to recognise different uses of land and to explain why buildings are located in the local area. By contrasting the locality with another of similar size in the UK, pupils can recognise



Figure 5.2 A journey from home to school by a six-year-old, passing the neighbour's horse, family cars, overgrown railway line, bollards, a busy road and park. Source: Mia Grigg.

Table 5.1 The major aspects of local geography in primary school

Settlement:	• variety and styles of homes • origin of the settlement • layout of the settlement • building and land use • growth and changes
Services:	• shops and services • public and private
Leisure:	• leisure, activities, facilities • parks, open spaces
Journeys:	• roads, paths in locality • linking to other places • buses, railways, air, boat • journeys people make • movement of goods • transport networks
Works:	• different types of work • industry, agriculture, retail • location of economic activities • why they are there • how they are changing
Land use:	• different types of land use • patterns of land use • competition for land • conflict over use
People moving:	• why do people move • where to, where from
Attitudes:	• likes and dislikes • changes desired • effects on people
Landscape:	• different types of relief features • variety of rocks and soil • water: streams/rivers, ponds/lakes • the effects of finding e.g. artefacts and minerals • types of fresh water supply
Weather:	• heat, sun/cloud, wind, precipitation
Environment:	• changes to the environment • effects of pollution • managing and restoring • protecting environments

Source: www.cumbriagridforlearning.org.uk

similarities and differences in physical features and lifestyles. Their knowledge of inter-dependence can be increased by exploring areas such as tourism, trade and employment.

Local study should promote geographical skills such as using maps, following routes and graphicacy (interpreting and representing relationships). As part of a Young Geographer's Project, one teacher worked with Year 5 pupils to produce a long 'journey stick' style map with a series of photographs to which children added comments on their return to school. Photographs were taken of any features that interested the group (www.geography.org.uk/projects/younggeographers/resources/stpeters). By applying these skills in real-life contexts, pupils develop their locational knowledge and raise awareness of local issues, for example the challenge for park keepers to maintain a clean, interesting and attractive environment in different seasons.

In walking around the park, pupils should consider design features such as kiosks, performance space, paths, benches, statues and playground. They should record how these are being used. Pupils can produce a photographic log of features and later in the classroom arrange these, highlighting the location on a map, writing or describing suitable captions. They can also use digital photographs to produce a timeline of their day, such as 'We passed this shop on the right at 9:30 am' or 'This is the door to the museum, which we entered at 10:00 am'. The photographs can be sorted into groups to introduce the basic concept of land use, for instance those showing homes, shops, places of worship and offices. Comparisons can be drawn using pictures such as 'holiday snaps', Google images or postcards, showing other settlements in Britain and around the world. Affective or emotional maps, where pupils record their feelings about a place, are a useful means of visually expressing pupils' responses to school and other local environments (Tanner, 2009). Their use also empowers children to consider what action is necessary to improve 'negative' places. Potter and Scoffham (2006) discuss a case study of a boy with autistic spectrum difficulties whose map of the school was almost entirely 'sad' aside from the school office 'where everyone just keeps smiling at me'; the pupil was able to relate the experiences that lay behind his feelings.

Religious starting points

From a religious perspective, local study enables pupils to increase their awareness of different religions, beliefs, values and traditions. This can be achieved through the following means:

- exploring children's sense of belonging as members of local groups and clubs;
- organising regular local walks, pointing out how the environment should be cared for;
- listening and responding to visitors from local and wider faith communities;
- arranging visits to different places of worship, and focusing on the impact these have in the local community;
- understanding the role of local religious leaders;
- considering the feelings of other people at home, in the local community and in different parts of the world;
- visiting old people's homes to promote the value of giving;

- investigating local acts of neighbourliness, for instance by scanning newspapers; and
- telling stories about saints and religious figures associated with local churches.

As McCreery *et al.* (2008) point out, visiting speakers do not need to be members of the clergy – the best visitors are often parents, grandparents or other teachers. Visitors should not be asked to pray with children and the teacher should, if necessary, reassure parents with different beliefs that the session is purely educational while respecting their right to withdraw their children from the lesson.

Places of worship

It is important for learners to recognise that there may be a range of different places of worship within their local community, as any perusal of a telephone directory will reveal.

In areas where there are one or two predominant religions, it is just as important for pupils to think about why this might be and how they can learn about other faiths. It is likely that any class visits to places of worship will occur outside times for worship and there is a danger that children see and recall their emptiness rather than their vibrancy; hence the importance of liaising closely with the respective faith representative who may be able to provide photographs, artefacts, sound recordings or other sources. In any event, teachers can access excellent online guidance on preparation and etiquette when visiting places of worship for the six major faiths. In some areas, faith trails have been set up to introduce walkers to the history, beliefs and key locations of different faiths. In Bolton this covers 16 places of worship within a nine-mile zone (see Figure 5.3). Primary school children can create their own local faith walks on a much smaller scale.

Churches are arranged with increasing degrees of holiness. The churchyard wall stood as a boundary and in medieval times those that passed inside it entered a protected area where criminals could not be arrested. The church itself is divided into particular areas.

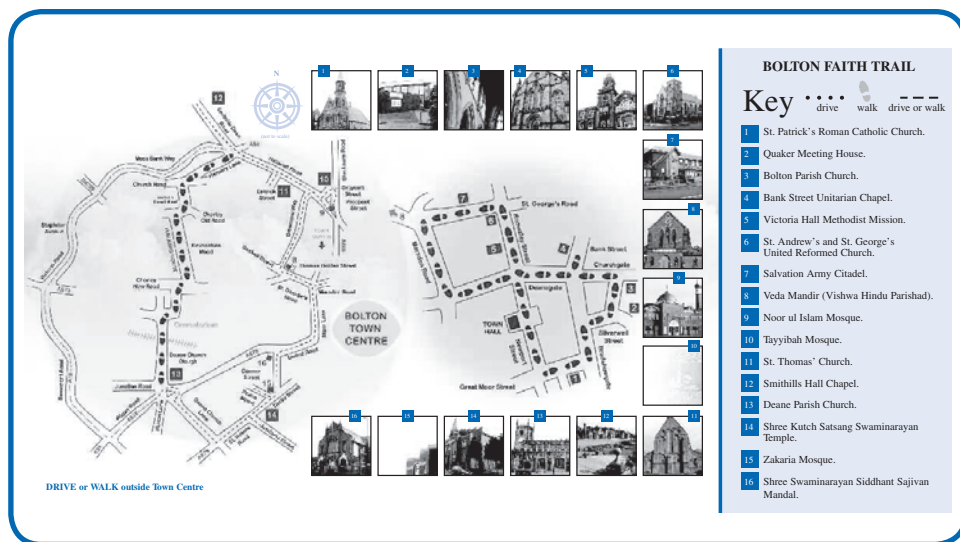


Figure 5.3 Bolton Faith Trail. Source: Bolton Interfaith Council www.boltoncommunity.co.uk/sei/s/911/f1.pdf.

The nave, the main body of the building, is where the congregation worships. Beyond this up a few steps lies the chancel, usually containing choir stalls. Next, the sanctuary is set aside for the priests and their attendants. This area is often separated from the chancel by an arch and altar rail. Within the sanctuary itself lies the altar. Behind this, in Roman Catholic churches, is the tabernacle – regarded as one of the most holy places. Some schools use churches and other places of worship to hold assemblies in an effort to convey the distinctive atmosphere of worship. Ofsted (2008b: 11) reports:

In [one] school, in the face of some parental opposition, the headteacher felt it was extremely important to continue taking pupils each year to a mosque because simply being in that place contributed much to the pupils' understanding of Islam. It also helped to promote community cohesion.

Visits to churches and other places of worship can include on-site activities such as:

- looking for and labelling architectural features;
- noting language on tombstones;
- drawing sketch plans and elevations;
- estimating and measuring; and
- discussion on personal responses (e.g. how does the place make you feel?).

Following such experiences, pupils can devise questions for future visits. The following are examples of questions from nine and ten-year-olds who visited a mosque (Barnett *et al.*, 1987: 109):

<i>Religious buildings</i>	What do you call the building where you meet? How often is your building full?
<i>Religious leaders</i>	What do you call a leader in your religion? What does your work involve? Why did you become a religious leader?
<i>Clothes and food</i>	Do you wear special clothes at any time? Is there any food that you do not eat?
<i>Special days</i>	What are the names of your special festivals? What day do you normally meet?
<i>Holy book</i>	What is your holy book called? Who wrote it? How often do you read it? What language is it written in?
<i>Prayers</i>	Do you believe in one God? What is the name of your God? Do you have a special prayer? Do you teach children to pray?

Churches and other places of worship have a rich symbolism, conveyed for instance through numbers, colours and shapes. In Christendom, the cross is the major symbol,

although historically it pre-dates Christianity – the ancient Egyptians had an ankh and the Indians a Swastika. Five, being the number of fingers on each hand and toes on each foot, clearly has had considerable significance since time immemorial; in Christian tradition '5' stands for the five wounds that Jesus suffered during his crucifixion while the number '7' represents perfection. Colours can have special meaning – green is the colour of life and growth while black symbolises sickness, death and mourning.

There are many time-markers within churches and churchyards that can help children develop a sense of chronology. Aside from gravestones, the time span covered by old trees can be recorded on timelines and compared with other 'natural' markers, such as the lifetime of bats and other wildlife. Prosser (1982) used a 600-year-old yew tree in a local churchyard as a 'living link' to the time of Henry V and the Battle of Agincourt – local archers participated and he speculated with the children as to whether the bows were made from the local yew. Church architectural features, such as wall paintings, windows and bell towers, also serve as discussion points.

Planning and managing a local study

Like any other unit of work, when planning a local study consideration should be given to intended learning outcomes, the allocation of resources, group organisation, assessment opportunities and health and safety matters. The schemes of work formerly provided by the DfES-run standards website (now hosted at the National Archives) include examples for local study. Excellent guidance is also available through some local authorities and professional bodies such as the Geographical Association. For instance, the Essex Grid for Learning includes support modules, for its Religious Education Agreed Syllabus, on 'The Local Anglican Parish Church' and 'Christianity in the local community' (www.e-gfl.org).

Principles for planning and managing local study are as follows:

- Start with familiar surroundings (i.e. the school and its grounds), moving 'outwards' to the surrounding streets and wider locality;
- Draw upon children's experiences (e.g. what they see on their way to school, where they shop, where they live, where they play games);
- Choose a focused rather than a broad subject (e.g. the High Street) rather than the whole village or town;
- Try to personalise local studies (e.g. by exploring what happened to a particular family in the past, or making use of local speakers to convey particular viewpoints);
- Frame the study with clear questions (e.g. What do we already know about the area? What is it famous for? What do we want to find out? What jobs do people do? What recreation is available? How has our locality changed? How is it different from . . . ? What might it be like in the future?);
- Involve the pupils in the planning, 'doing' (investigating) and reviewing stages;
- Take opportunities to compare and contrast the locality with other areas (e.g. by drawing upon pupils' holiday experiences);

- Acknowledge diversity within the locality (e.g. different viewpoints relating to a particular issue);
- Avoid stereotypes (e.g. teachers in our school during Victorian times were cruel and strict);
- Always set the local study in context (e.g. by considering the wider national picture);
- Identify and build upon key vocabulary (e.g. create glossaries, dictionaries and 'word walls');
- Use a range of stimulating sources including maps, artefacts, aerial photographs and memories;
- Emphasise the opportunities pupils have to add to our knowledge and understanding by undertaking unique research;
- Plan to develop enquiry skills including: observing, collecting, analysing sources, evaluating issues and synthesising information;
- Provide opportunities for first-hand visits to libraries, local museums and galleries;
- Build up a network of useful local contacts (e.g. librarians, curators, ministers, local historical society);
- Integrate information and communication technologies throughout the study (e.g. set up an ongoing database to record findings from surveys); and
- At the outset consider the intended 'product' outcomes (e.g. a school anniversary poster, a book about 'special people in our area', materials for a website or an exhibition at a local library).

Selecting the focus for local study will be influenced by curriculum requirements, staff expertise, the availability and accessibility of resources, time and the costs of planned visits. The locality offers so many possible content areas within the natural and human environments (see Figure 5.4). The natural environment, arising from the interaction of the earth's physical features and processes, creates diverse landscapes from dense woodlands to rocky seashores. The built environment is equally varied, from Victorian terraces to isolated farming communities. Other human environments result from social and cultural activities such as cooperative societies, Sunday schools and festivals.

Curriculum requirements

Local study is a common feature to the curricula throughout the UK, although teachers have considerable flexibility in choosing the content. The curriculum in England is under review at the time of writing, but the locality has been a longstanding feature of primary history, geography and religious education. In Wales, in Key Stage 2 history teachers can opt for a long-term study of changes in education or the history of a local castle or church, or a short-term study of one important event such as the effect of a war on the locality. In the Northern Ireland primary curriculum, the locality is integrated within four strands (interdependence, movement and energy, place and change over time) that make up the *World Around Us* (one of the seven areas of learning). In Scotland's *Curriculum for Excellence* (Scottish Executive, 2005), there is a strong local thread to social studies experiences and outcomes.

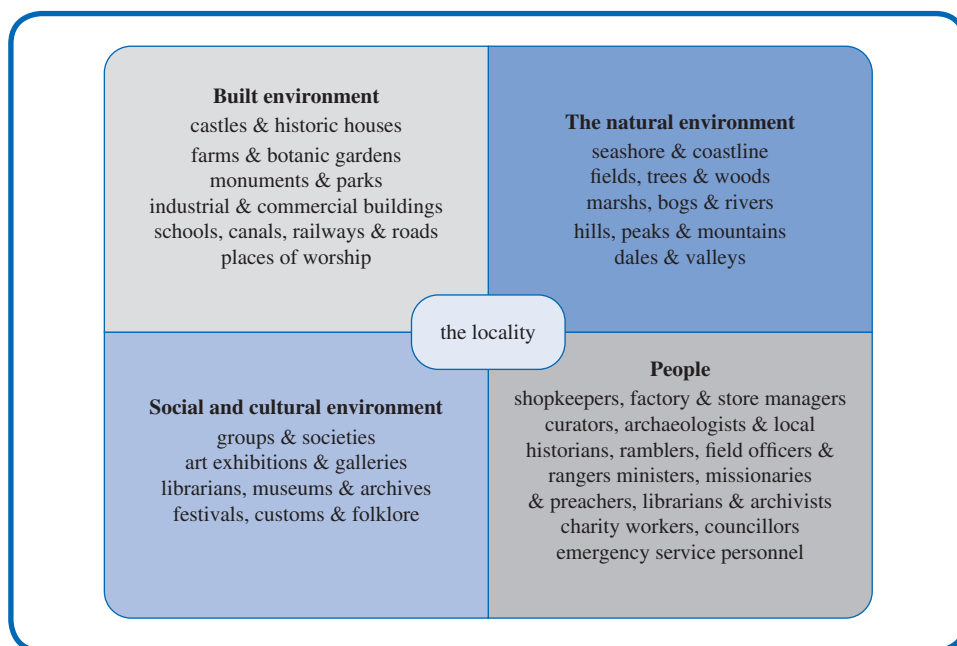


Figure 5.4 Dimensions of local study.

TASK

- Research the requirements for teaching about the locality in 'knowledge and understanding of the world' within the Early Years.

Enquiry-based learning

Local study is an ideal context for enquiry-based learning (EBL), which has a long tradition in the primary school under different guises such as 'discovery learning' (DES, 1967; Rowland, 1984). Although EBL is defined in different ways, the emphasis is on children asking questions, purposeful talk, working together, selecting and interpreting sources, outdoor learning and developing a line of enquiry. Successful EBL should not only develop pupils' local knowledge, thinking skills and respect for the environment, but also enable them to show responsibility, independence and an eagerness to find out more. The 'S' model (see Figure 5.5) highlights the key elements in good enquiry at all levels. A clear structure is necessary to make most effective use of time and resources. The skill of selecting carefully what information is needed should be taught from an early age. Discussion and modelling exercises can help learners choose the right questions to explore and frame a realistic line of enquiry within the time available. Hence a local study needs a sharp focus, building on what learners already know.

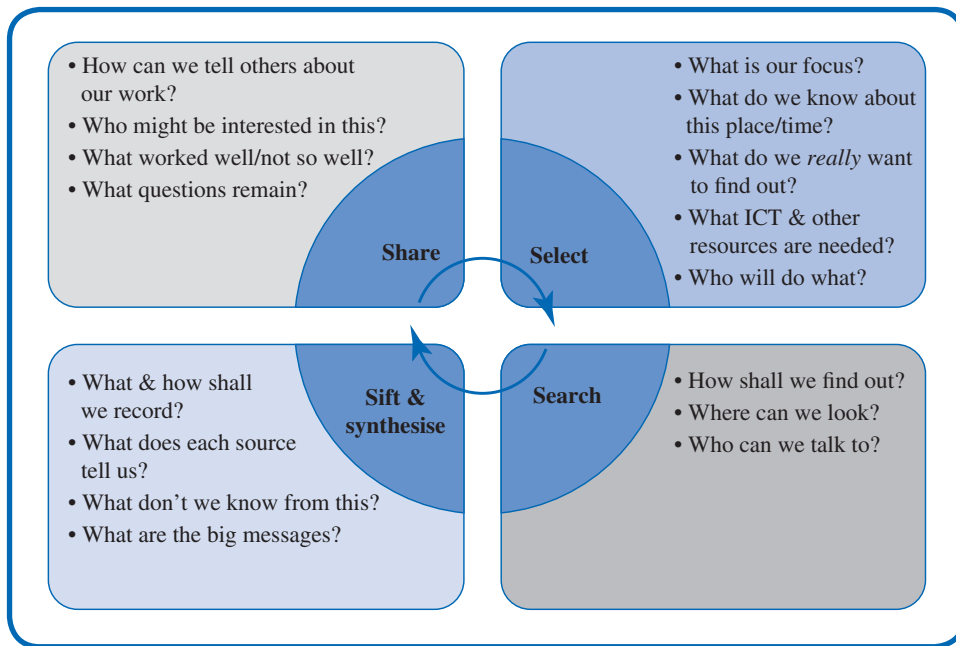


Figure 5.5 The S model – a simplified planning tool for local enquiries. *Source:* Russell Grigg.

Questions, sources and approaches – an example of exploring a street

A topic such as 'Our Street' offers a wealth of learning opportunities in the humanities (see Table 5.2) and has proven popular in the primary school for many years (Clear, 1987; Wood, 1994). Ideally, a chosen street would contain residential houses, a place of worship, public buildings and commercial premises, drawn from different periods of history. It should be easily accessible on foot during visits. The physical and social development of street life is well captured in Millard's beautifully illustrated *A Street Through Time* (Dorling Kindersley, 1998). Readers can see the importance of the river in the story, of a street spanning thousands of years, from supplying clean water and fresh fish for a camp of nomadic hunter-gatherers to bringing new trade to the village, then town and finally city.

For centuries, streets have attracted the interest of social observers – largely because they have witnessed the full range of human experience, including:

- cultural events (e.g. carnivals, musical performances and art exhibitions);
- political expressions (e.g. protests, riots and election campaigns);
- religious occasions (e.g. prayer meetings, preaching activities and Sunday school parades);
- social gatherings (e.g. parties and coffee mornings); and
- commercial activities (e.g. street markets and illicit activities such as drug deals).

Table 5.2 Possible learning opportunities in humanities for 'Our Street'

Historical	Geographical	Religious	Social
• Study change over time using a range of primary sources (e.g. census returns, old maps, photographs). • Interview elderly residents. • Explore the meaning behind street names, shop signs, plaques and signposts. • Investigate history of particular buildings. • Construct a timeline of the street. • Take photographs of historic street furniture and research their usefulness. • Read stories of famous people or landmarks in the street.	• Identify natural and physical features using Ordnance Survey maps, fieldwork, aerial photographs. • Investigate the story of products sold by street traders and services. • Map the distribution of litter and litter bins. • Locate and chart the different kinds of buildings. • Chart the different materials used in buildings. • Explore the pattern and layout of streets. • Photograph and compare different shop faccias. • Study local weather patterns. • Classify different kinds of streets in locality (main, intermediate and service roads). • Compare streets from around the world. • Conduct traffic surveys. • Map the street for land use. • Classify street furniture (e.g. those for drivers and pedestrians) for different services.	• Study sources such as religious artefacts and symbols in the street. • Devise a faith trail. • Visit places of worship on the street. • Reflect upon the messages behind street monuments such as war memorials. • Discuss how streets make people feel e.g. safe, fearful, angry, cool. • Explore the work of missionaries, 'Big Issue' and charities such as Oxfam to rescue people from the streets (e.g. street gangs).	• Debate issues affecting the school grounds and building. • Conduct surveys to gain insights into people's views on social issues such as pedestrianisation. • Find out about the council's approach to sustainability (e.g. reduction of carbon footprint through cycle paths). • Compare the work of different street artists including the use of graffiti. • Organise a social event for the community. • Interview local councillors, charity workers and ministers about issues such as homelessness, vandalism and litter. • Pose questions for debate (e.g. Are street musicians a nuisance?).

Streets matter because they are not only places to live, work and shop, but they have a strong psychological hold on people's lives. The Catholic historian Paul Johnson (2004: 50) remembers, as a child of the 1930s, Primitive Methodists preaching on street corners and singing hymns, leaving him to ask: 'Were they really "primitive", something I associated with 'natives' in Africa, who wore paint (and) carried spears?' There are many local library publications that explain the origin and development of streets; for instance Leslie and Leslie's (2003) account of 100 streets in central Newcastle and Horton's (2002) thematic approach to street names in Liverpool.

Hitchcock and Shore's (2002) comprehensive study of London streets raises questions such as 'How did you find your way in a badly mapped London without formal addresses?' and 'Has the London cabbie changed at all?'

Fieldwork

The most effective studies of streets include regular fieldwork experiences. Children need to build up a picture of a street by taking photographs, interviewing residents, carrying out surveys and examining buildings. When children walk along a street it is important that they are encouraged to explore at different levels (see Figure 5.6). Looking above, they can take note of the height of houses, any chimneys, the shape and style of the windows and doors. At ground level children can also look out for inspection covers for fire hydrants, sewers and coal holes. The latter can be found

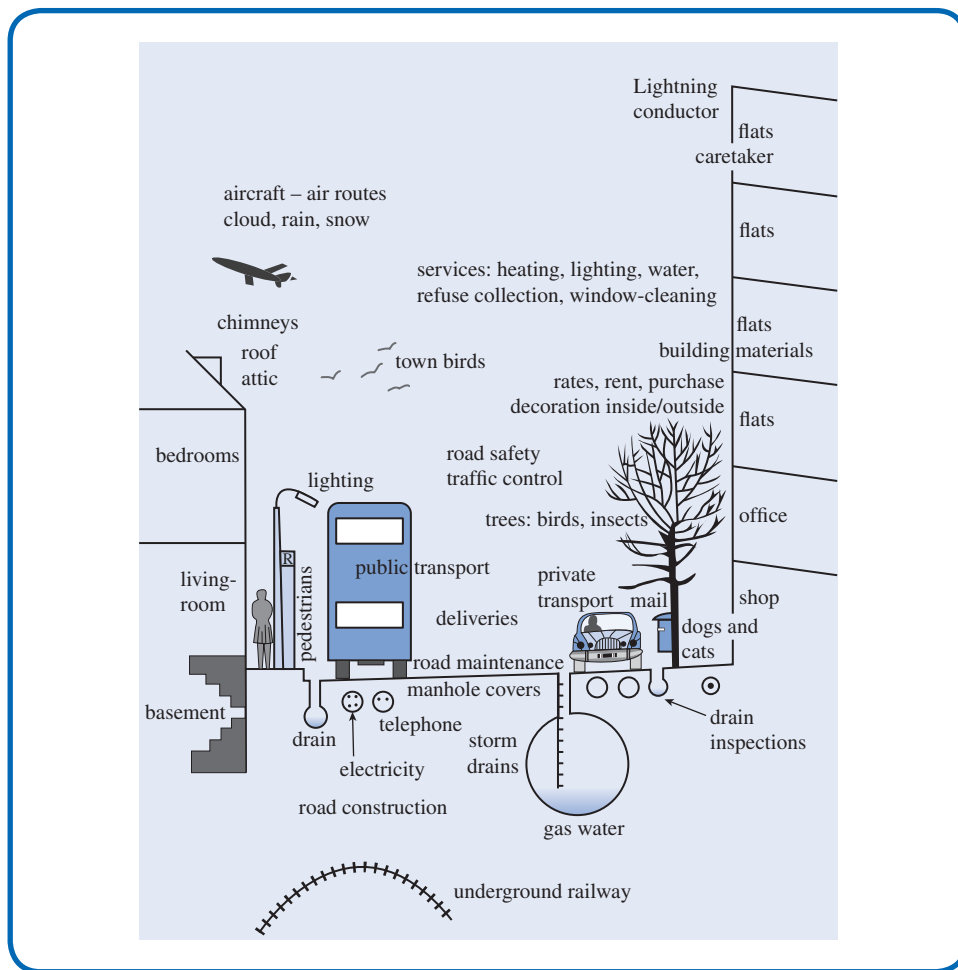


Figure 5.6 Cross-section of a street. *Source:* Waters, (1982: 76).



Photo 5.3 Composite collections of street signs. Source: R. Grigg.

in the pavements outside Victorian houses that had cellars under the road (Warren, 1978). The key point is for children is to see how such furnishings relate to people's lives. Hence coal was tipped through the coal-hole covers into cellars at a time when coal was a major source of household fuel. The covers were no more than a foot in diameter to prevent easy entry for a burglar. Street signs can be used as a basis for discussions over the management of traffic (see [Photo 5.3](#)). Street jewellery can be seen in many museums, such as the Black Country Living Museum, Blists Hill Victorian Town and Beamish, North of England Open Air Museum.

Sources

Any investigation of place requires an understanding of source material. For those teachers with a keen interest in local history, there are many first-rate guides (Stephens, 1994; Lord, 1999; Carter and Thompson, 2005; Andrews, 2007). There are also comprehensive guides to family history, which often has close associations with local study (Barratt, 2008). Sources can be difficult to trace, partial in nature and very time-consuming to collate. Many are not in a form accessible to young children, or require sophisticated re-working and interpretation. Put simply, primary sources need to be handled with care. Historical records were not intended for study in the classroom. Moreover, especially with the advent of the Internet, the indiscriminate collection of sources can leave the researcher overwhelmed. Nonetheless, sources – whether historical, geographical or religious in nature – form the backbone of local study. There are many sources related to a study of streets and the locality in general (see [Table 5.3](#)).

Nineteenth- and twentieth-century street scenes can be found for all towns and cities in published photographic histories. Teachers can access extensive online collections of old photographs, such as the evocative Victorian London street scenes of John Thompson (www.victorianlondon.org). Thompson described characters such as 'Cast-Iron Billy' who, for over 40 years, worked 14-hour shifts as an omnibus driver in the streets of London (Thompson, 1877). Local photographs are an excellent historical source, shedding light not only on the physical layout of streets but also on

Table 5.3 Notes on some of the main sources for a study of streets—most are available in county record offices or libraries

Sources	Contents
Maps	There are many different kinds of maps. Ordnance Survey maps show the development of the street and area since the nineteenth century, raising questions about changes in employment, origin of street names, disappearance of buildings and changes in land use. Earlier maps, including those of Christopher Saxton (1542–1611) and John Speed (1552–1629), show the layout of Tudor and Stuart towns.
Buildings	The buildings along a street can include shops, places of worship, schools, theatres and houses. Each will have its own historical and geographical context. Household records include inventories listing furniture and utensils. School records include logbooks, punishment ledgers and admission registers.
Illustrations	Photographs, most dating from the 1860s, often contain street images. They are very good for ‘then’ and ‘now’ discussions relating to changes in the street over time. Oblique photographs are taken at angles less than 90 degrees to the ground. They are taken by a photographer through the window of an aeroplane. They enable pupils to identify physical features while the front of buildings can still be seen. Aerial photographs are taken from immediately overhead, using a camera fixed to the underside of an aeroplane, pointing directly downwards at 90 degrees to the ground. Before the age of photography, prints and drawings were the main visual sources. More recently, films and videos have become available.
Transport records	The maintenance of roads produced many records such as those belonging to Turnpike Trusts, which were responsible for the upkeep and improvement of highways.
Travel writers’ accounts	Early traveller accounts include Daniel Defoe’s <i>A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain</i> (1724–6). Local record offices may hold examples of diaries and journey descriptions.
Newspapers	Informative about events such as street markets, street parades, social events (e.g. races) and advertisements of local shops in street. Key source for news of the day, major events, local stories, prices, crime, births, marriages and deaths. Most libraries keep old newspapers on microfilm with some indexes depending on the newspaper and the library. The British Newspaper Library at Colindale, north London, is the major repository of British and Irish newspapers.
Street furniture	Furniture belonging to the street represents tangible links to the past. These items are also a means of developing spatial awareness by exploring their location in relation to buildings. Furniture such as red telephone boxes have become part of Britain’s identity.
Trade directories	Identify property owners, names of shopkeepers, list of various tradesmen and brief descriptions of villages/towns such as times of street markets. Useful for comparing occupational change by using trade directories over a long period, such as 50 years.
Census returns	From 1841–1911, these provide details of people who lived in a street including age, gender, birthplace and occupation. Possible to trace who lived in street from one census to the next. Key source for a study of population statistics, trades/occupations, living conditions and demographics. Census records are closed for 100 years.

(Continued)

Table 5.3 (Continued)

Sources	Contents
People's memories	Oral or spoken history provides valuable information about the lives of ordinary citizens, often neglected in standard histories. Older people may recollect street parties, particular traders and changes to shopping.
Court records	Petty session records include details of criminal prosecutions such as drunk and disorderly conduct in the street, or theft from a shop. The modern equivalent is the magistrates' court.
Postcards	First sent in 1870, postcards had become very popular by the 1920s, regarded as 'the phone call of the early part of the [twentieth] century' (Phillips, 2000: 13). Delivery was very quick, with up to five deliveries a day and it was not uncommon to find messages written at lunchtime to say that the writer would be home late for tea.

the human condition – for instance Scottish children are shown with bare feet and bent legs as a result of rickets (Smout, 1986). Newspapers and other contemporary journalist accounts provide a wealth of information about street life. Journalist Henry Mayhew recorded the diversity of poor street traders in *London Labour and the London Poor* (1851–62). He divided street people into six categories: sellers, buyers, finders, performers, working pedlars and labourers. Mayhew includes portraits of 'untouchables' such as scavengers, street sweepers and London nightmen who collected waste. He goes further than most by drawing outcasts from *beneath* the streets, such as the riverside mud larks, sewer ratcatchers and cesspool cleaners. Teachers can use extracts as a basis for discussions about moral issues such as poverty, charity and child labour (Volume 1 is available online at the University of Virginia Library's website, etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/MayLond.html).

Social issues such as homelessness can be introduced through stories based on street life. For instance, Berlie Doherty's award-winning novel *The Street Child* (HarperCollins, 1995) is a fictionalised account of Jim Jarvis, the child that Dr Barnardo cited as the reason for opening his first home for children. The BBC has produced an audio pack to accompany the story (www.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/english/streetchild.shtml). These stories have resonance today. According to UN sources, there are approximately 150 million street children in the world. In terms of global citizenship, teachers can use resources produced by many charities, denominations and governments seeking to improve life for street children, such as UNESCO's Programme for the Education of Children in Need, which uses dance, music, sports, circus and art to 'rescue' children.

Libraries

There has been very little research in the UK on the impact of public libraries on pupils' learning. International evidence suggests pupils' reading attainment improves when there are close working relationships between librarians and teachers (Williams *et al.*, 2002).

These can take various forms including: electronic network links (such as a shared catalogue); book talks by public library staff at the school; homework alerts to the public library; referral of more complex reference questions from the school library; bulk loan of books and other resources from the public library. In the UK, innovative schemes have included storytelling librarians, who visited parks, housing estates and other community settings to share folk tales (Hill, 1973). More recently, the School Library Association advertises major events such as World Book Day, conferences and initiatives, such as the British Library's request in November 2011 for stories about playground games from the past (www.sla.org.uk/index.php). Pupils should also make regular and productive use of their class and school libraries. The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) has produced helpful guidelines for primary school libraries (CILIP, 2002) covering the selection of resources, budgets, organisation, creating the right environment, teaching information literacy and judging success. In general, pupils need to exercise ownership of their library in terms of design, choice of books and how it operates (Bakewell, 2010).

For the humanities, many libraries hold local studies collections containing a range of primary or first-hand sources. These include: photographs, maps, census returns and newspapers (see Table 5.3). Birmingham holds one of the largest collection of nineteenth-century topographical photographs in the world – including the Francis Frith collection. Many local studies libraries also publish colourful and informative leaflets and newsletters.

County record offices/archives

Archives are collections of documents, manuscripts or other primary evidence, although the term is often used to describe the building in which they are housed. Many archives welcome young researchers if accompanied by an adult. There are strict rules relating to the handling of materials because they are often unique and irreplaceable. Archive sources such as census returns, maps and diaries can be an excellent springboard for geography, citizenship, mathematics and creative writing. The thrill of discovering something personal, such as an ancestor's school record, remains the greatest attraction of visiting archives. Most archives allow photocopying of records and in some cases visitors can take digital photographs of sources. Increasingly, source material is being made available online, for instance at the National Archives, which also offers comprehensive support materials for teachers and lists collections of archive material at local studies libraries (www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/nra/default.asp). The Scottish Archive Network includes an education microsite containing a guide to sources (www.scan.org.uk/). Kitching (1996) provides a concise and readable overview of archives while Coulston and Crawford (1995) focus on their educational potential. The ARCHON Directory includes contact details for record repositories in the UK (www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archon).

Other repositories

The websites for the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in the UK include aerial photographs and other sources, along with guidance for teachers. Coflein (from the Welsh *cof*, 'memory', and *lein*, 'line'), is the online database

for the National Monuments Record of Wales (NMRW), the national collection of information about the historic environment of Wales (www.coflein.gov.uk). Similar facilities are available for other parts of the UK. The Archaeology Data Service (ADS) supports research, learning and teaching with high-quality and dependable digital resources (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk>). Its website includes an image bank covering the whole of the UK, from stone circles at Beaghmore (County Tyrone) to a Second World War pillar box overlooking Meadowsfoot Beach (Devon).

Street games, traffic and furniture

Exploring memories of street games is a rich source for local study. The street is one of the oldest play-places in the world – a source of perennial fun. The Opies (1969) found 2,500 names for street games played by children in England, Scotland and Wales during their research in the 1950s and 1960s. Teachers themselves, especially those over the age of 40, will recollect playing games on the streets or in the field without fear or restriction. As Kelleher (2007: 9) asks: ‘Today’s 8-year-old can dance, swim and may even speak a second language. But can they play hopscotch?’ In reality, folklorists show that concerns about the decline of play are not new. In the nineteenth century, commentators blamed regimented national schools and the railways; in the twentieth century, it was the turn of the cinema, radio and gramophone; the twentieth-century scapegoats include comics, television and computer games (Bishop and Curtis, 2001). Many traditional games, rather than dying out, have been modified and relocated away from streets.

Able-bodied children and adults can take for granted the relative ease of moving around modern-day streets. Before the development of tarmac in the early twentieth century, roads constructed of limestone produced clouds of dust in the summer and ditches full of water in the winter (Reid, 2005). Prior to the development of gas (1803) and then electric street lighting, in most European towns and cities it was possible to hire linkboys, who would carry links (torches) to help pedestrians find their way around dark streets. In some communities they were nicknamed ‘moon cursers’ because they cursed the moonlight for damaging their trade. Wealthy families had their own footmen, who carried lanterns as they trotted alongside coaches, while one London tradesman taught his dog to carry a lantern in its mouth (Ekirch, 2005). In the absence of light, smells acted as invisible signposts – ranging from the fragrance of a honeysuckle bush to the stench of a dunghill – to aid individuals find their way around. A change of pavement level also alerted pedestrians to their location and it was common for individuals to use canes and staffs to feel the street ahead. Fanny Boscawen, an eighteenth-century aristocrat, developed a fear of going out at night when she was ‘forced to walk gropingly like a blind man’ (Ekirch, 2005: 134). Darkened streets in the pre-modern age were associated with thieves, murderers and evil spirits. Even in the daylight, streets could be dangerous places. Police and court records fascinate children, though teachers need to exercise some caution in selecting extracts, given the nature of some crimes; prostitution was a major street problem in many towns. In Bristol, police diaries described Victorian policemen walking on the beat encountering beggars, drunkards and rival football fans (Reid, 2005)!

Children’s social skills can be promoted by arranging opportunities to interview elderly residents about their street memories. Teachers can also draw upon

local biographies. Daiches (1957), a Scottish Jew, recalled his childhood streets in Edinburgh:

A horse-drawn cart . . . the rattle of early morning milk-traps or the heavy clatter of vans drawing cases of Leitch's lemonade or Dunbar's mineral waters or sacks of coal along the uneven Melville Terrace. A chalk mark in the street brings back the girls playing 'peevers' on the Edinburgh pavements, or skipping to the traditional chants. And the traditional chanting of Hebrew prayers brings back the Meadows . . . and the old synagogue in Graham Street (pulled down over twenty years ago) with its mixed congregation of Yiddish-speaking immigrants and native-born Edinburgh Jews with their strong Edinburgh accent even in the singing of Hebrew hymns.

(Cited by Lownie, 2004: 188)

Such memories open up powerful discussion points on social change, identities, and tradition. Buildings that have long vanished can be traced on local maps and plans.

Many streets will have monuments and statues to commemorate local landowners, generals, monarchs, writers and engineers (Darke, 1991). They also represent particular trades associated with the area, such as the Burton Cooper in Burton-on-Trent. Memorials can be powerful reminders of a troubled past, such as the street plaques and murals in Belfast (Viggiani, 2006; see <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/viggiani/introduction.htm>). Few communities were unaffected by the two World Wars and the local war memorial is an important resource in addressing the question 'What are we remembering on Remembrance Day?' There are 36,000 First World War memorials in Britain alone, representing a 'massive and unprecedented outpouring of national grief' for the loss of a million or so men (Oliver, 2005: xi). These are the more prominent items of 'street furniture', but consideration should also be given to the more mundane structures such as post boxes, telephone kiosks and traffic lights. All of these determine the identity of a square, street or town. Nineteenth-century public water pumps were essential even though, as Warren (1978) points out, in some rural areas they could be a quarter of a mile away from houses, forcing some to use polluted river waste for cooking and washing. Van Effulen (2010) describes street furniture as the 'secret star of urban outdoor design', pointing out how benches, fountains and even rubbish bins make a significant contribution to the urban experience. Baglee and Morley (2006) have published a fascinating collection of 2,500 street signs that were common throughout Britain (see also <http://streetjewellery.com>). Where possible, it is important to look at the stories behind street furniture and consider the impact for residents today. A series of questions can be posed, such as: Why were traffic lights invented? What benefits have they brought? How do they work?

Street safety

Street safety should form an important aspect of a school's planning for personal, social and health education. The Pedestrians Association (now Living Streets) was instrumental in bringing about the introduction of the driving test, pedestrian crossings and 30 mph (48 kph) speed limits. Throughout the UK, Living Streets now supports community empowerment, which it describes as 'local people taking control and deciding what they need for their area, rather than accepting things as the way they are' (Living Streets Scotland, 2009: 9). The charity produces a range of resources

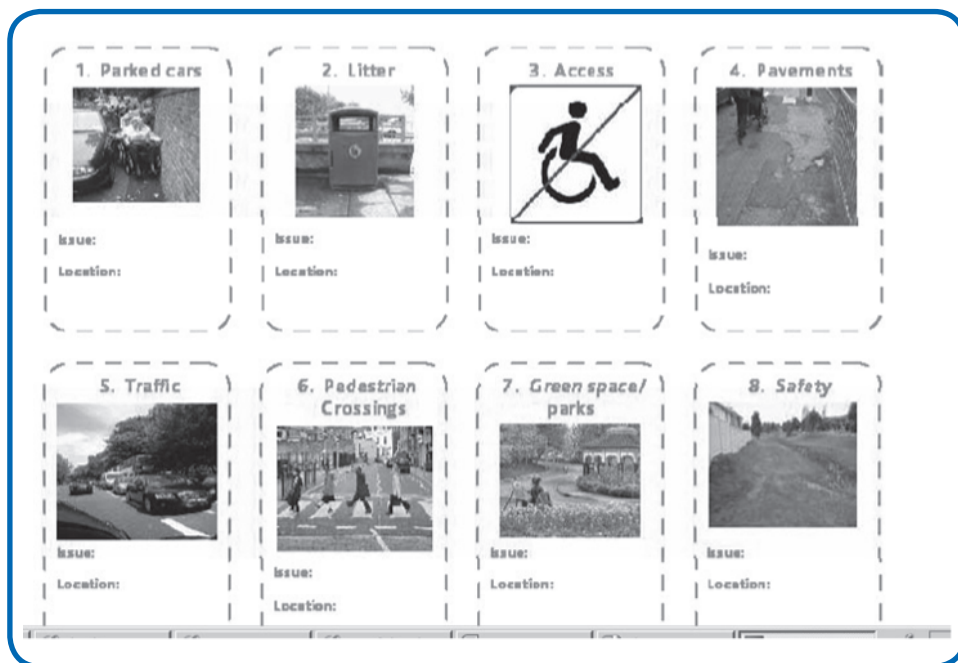


Figure 5.7 Potential environmental issues associated with streets. Source: Living Streets Scotland www.livingstreets.org.uk

to engage the community, including a toolkit to undertake an assessment of the local environment where main issues are identified (see Figure 5.7). Schools that have participated in street improvement projects have secured positive changes working alongside local councils.

A topic such as 'Our Street' illustrates the importance of making learning relevant, stimulating and enjoyable. Local study provides an ideal context for pupils to take increasing responsibility for their own learning. They can work with authentic materials, engage with real-life debates and focus on current 'live' issues.

Conclusion

One of the key dimensions to local study is focusing on what kind of *future* neighbourhood pupils would like to see. A futures perspective is critical to reframing the curriculum so that schools enable pupils to consider alternative futures, acknowledging cultural, economic, environmental and political influences. Several writers (Page, 2000; Hicks, 2001) highlight the 'missing' futures perspective in the curriculum and the right of pupils to explore their views on how they can contribute to making a just and sustainable future. The Transition Movement suggests that life without oil could be more enjoyable than people think and is committed to supporting local communities by moving away from dependency on fossil fuels, encouraging the growth of local food, sustainable homes and currency (www.transitionnetwork.org).

SUMMARY

- Local study has considerable educational potential as pupils engage with real environments.
- Begin local study by investigating the school and its grounds. Widen the study to the immediate area and neighbourhood.
- Contrast the locality to other areas in the UK and overseas.
- Historical experiences should include the stories behind local landmarks, events, customs and characters.
- Geographical experiences should focus on learning about the physical, environmental and human features of the locality.
- In religious education, pupils should learn about local places of worship and the impact these have on the community.
- In planning and managing a local study, teachers should have clear objectives in mind and consider carefully factors such as health and safety when taking pupils outdoors.
- Pupils should have opportunities to pursue lines of enquiry in their local study by visiting libraries, museums, galleries and archives.
- Topics such as 'Our Street' illustrate the kinds of questions, sources and approaches to local study. Pupils should gain first-hand experiences in developing fieldwork skills. They should learn how to interpret a range of written, oral and visual sources.

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Useful Websites

The Westminster Government's Learning Outside the Classroom website: www.lotc.org.uk.

Examples of local authority guidance for planning local studies include Hertfordshire at: www.thegrid.org.uk/learning/geography/ks1-2/resources; and Cumbria at: <http://www.succeedingwithscience.com/resource.php?id=28>.

The Geography British Isles project aims to collect geographically representative photographs and information for every square kilometre of Great Britain and Ireland: www.geography.org.uk.

The British Association of Local History includes suggestions for schools: www.balh.co.uk/education.php.

English Heritage 'Engaging Places' supports learning through buildings and places and includes primary school street investigation projects: www.engagingplaces.org.uk/home.

'Heritage Explorer' is a special site area from English Heritage with images for learning and other resources for teachers, including interactive whiteboard activities: www.heritageexplorer.org.uk/web/he/default.aspx.

A list of websites on 'Using the Locality' in Northern Ireland is available at: www.nicurriculum.org.uk/docs/key_stages_1_and_2/areas_of_learning/the_world_around_us/using_the_locality.pdf.