Strategies to enhance your pupils' cultural capital and their life experiences

Pupils with less cultural capital and fewer experiences may have had fewer opportunities to engage with the arts, visit significant places, travel beyond their local area, meet people from different backgrounds, or take part in activities that broaden their understanding of the wider world. Even when pupils' experiences are not especially limited, broadening this provision can improve vocabulary, comprehension, aspirations, confidence in unfamiliar settings, and the ability to make connections across the curriculum.

Effective enrichment must broaden pupils' horizons by exposing them to new people, places, ideas, and experiences that they may not otherwise encounter. Here are ideas to do this in each of the government's five categories.

Civic engagement

1. **Visits to local civic institutions:** visits to town halls, courts, council chambers, or community organisations help your pupils understand how society functions beyond their immediate experience. These encounters develop knowledge of the wider world and the roles people play within it.
2. **Community heritage projects:** pupils investigate local history, traditions, or significant figures and share their findings with others. This develops an understanding of the cultural and historical context of their community.
3. **Intergenerational projects:** working with older members of the community exposes pupils who can do it to different life experiences, perspectives, and historical events. Such interactions broaden pupils' understanding of society and social change.
4. **Participation in national campaigns or awareness events:** engaging with national initiatives helps your pupils see themselves as part of a wider society. It introduces issues, causes, and perspectives beyond their local environment.
5. **School partnerships with different communities:** collaborative projects with schools from contrasting geographical or socioeconomic contexts expose pupils to different experiences and viewpoints. Or a full *school twinning*!
6. **Visits from community leaders and professionals:** meeting people from a variety of occupations and backgrounds broadens pupils' awareness of careers, life journeys, and opportunities they may not previously have considered.

© Hampshire County Council 2026

Arts and culture

1. **Live theatre visits:** experiencing professional theatre introduces pupils to literature, storytelling, performance, and cultural traditions in a way that just cannot be replicated through a screen. It also provides valuable, shared experiences that enrich classroom learning. Some schools do annual whole-school theatre visits once a year.
2. **Museum and gallery visits:** museums and galleries expose pupils to art, history, science, and culture beyond the classroom. These visits provide background knowledge that supports learning across the curriculum. As well as those further afield, there are a wealth of them to be found here in Hampshire (www.visit-hampshire.co.uk/things-to-do/attractions/museums-and-heritage and www.visit-hampshire.co.uk/things-to-do/southampton-city-art-gallery-p6051).
3. **School arts festival:** an annual celebration of music, dance, drama, visual arts, and creative writing allows pupils to experience a range of cultural forms that they may not encounter elsewhere.
4. **Artist, musician, or author workshops:** working directly with creative professionals helps pupils appreciate artistic disciplines and exposes them to cultural experiences that can inspire future interests.
5. **World cultures club:** pupils explore music, traditions, stories, food, and celebrations from different cultures. This broadens their understanding and appreciation of other cultures and can be instantly linked to work on British values (respect/other cultures).
6. **Classical music and performance experiences:** introducing pupils to genres and art forms they may not otherwise access helps widen cultural knowledge and confidence in engaging with unfamiliar experiences. Do not play music they are familiar with when they enter for assembly – broaden their horizons.

Nature, outdoors and adventure

1. **Residential visits:** residentials provide experiences that many pupils may not otherwise access, including travel, independence, and outdoor challenges. They often become significant reference points in pupils' personal development.
2. **National Park or countryside visits:** exploring landscapes beyond the local area broadens pupils' understanding of geography, conservation, and the natural environment.
3. **Residential experiences:** for many pupils, this introduces entirely new experiences and develops familiarity with environments beyond home and school. Consider asking the PTA to support a hardship fund for those parents who may struggle with costs.
4. **Environmental action projects:** activities such as habitat restoration or sustainability initiatives help pupils engage with wider environmental issues and connect local actions to global challenges.
5. **Outdoor adventure days:** experiences such as climbing, kayaking, or archery expose pupils to activities that may not otherwise be available to them, broadening their experiences and interests.
6. **Wildlife and conservation visits:** visits to nature reserves, farms, or conservation centres provide first-hand experiences that deepen understanding of the natural world and support curriculum learning. There are a number of these in our county.

© Hampshire County Council 2026

Sport and physical activities

1. **Attendance at live sporting events:** watching professional or elite-level sport introduces pupils to experiences and environments they may not otherwise encounter. It can also spark new interests and ambitions.
2. **Taster sessions in less accessible sports:** introducing activities such as rowing, fencing, golf, cricket, climbing, or martial arts broadens pupils' experiences beyond the sports they already know.
3. **Inter-school competitions:** travelling to different venues and meeting pupils from other communities expands pupils' social experiences and confidence in unfamiliar settings.
4. **Sports leadership opportunities:** representing the school at events and working with external organisations exposes your pupils to wider networks and experiences.
5. **Inclusive physical activity festivals:** providing opportunities to participate in a variety of activities helps pupils discover interests they may not otherwise have explored.
6. **Visits from athletes and coaches:** meeting individuals with diverse backgrounds and experiences helps pupils understand the wide range of pathways available through sport.

Developing wider life and future skills

1. **Careers and aspirations week:** pupils meeting professionals from a wide range of sectors, many of which they may never have encountered before. This broadens awareness of future possibilities and pathways. You may know of former pupils of the school who you could approach as part of this. Try to ensure that your speakers explain the skills, qualities and any qualifications they will need to be successful in the area. Pupils often have only a vague understanding of this.
2. **STEM clubs linked to universities or industry:** partnerships with universities, employers, or STEM organisations expose pupils to environments and opportunities beyond their immediate community.
3. **Enterprise projects:** working on real-world business challenges introduces pupils to concepts, industries, and professional practices they may not encounter elsewhere.
4. **Educational visits to workplaces:** visits to businesses, hospitals, laboratories, media organisations, or engineering sites provide insight into the wider world of work.
5. **Digital connections with global communities:** video exchanges and collaborative projects with schools in different regions or countries help pupils understand different cultures and perspectives.
6. **Life skills workshops:** sessions on finance, travel, cooking, higher education, or independent living expose pupils to knowledge and experiences that support future participation in society.

© Hampshire County Council 2026

Why this works

Cultural capital is not simply about visiting a museum or attending a theatre performance. It is about helping pupils develop a richer understanding of the world and building a bank of experiences that they can draw upon throughout their education and lives.

The most effective enrichment here therefore seeks to provide:

- exposure to people, places, and ideas beyond pupils' immediate environment
- experiences that broaden horizons and challenge assumptions
- opportunities to engage with arts, culture, nature, and civic life
- encounters with professions, institutions, and communities that may be unfamiliar
- shared experiences that enhance curriculum learning and classroom discussion
- greater confidence in navigating unfamiliar settings.

Through carefully planned enrichment, your school can help ensure that pupils are not disadvantaged by reduced access to experiences that many others take for granted, enabling them to participate more fully in education, employment, and society.

Roary Pownall

PSHE Consultant, HIAS

© Hampshire County Council 2026

Information about Curriculum Updates

Compiled by Hampshire inspectors and advisers, the curriculum updates share examples of high-quality good practice to keep you up to date with subject or whole-school issues.

Subjects covered include:

- art
- computing/ICT
- English
- design and technology
- geography
- history
- mathematics
- modern foreign languages
- personal development learning (PDL)
- religious education
- rights and diversity education (RADE)
- science

The benefits of subscribing are:

- curriculum updates are a cost-effective means of getting top-level advice
- issued twice a year, they contain the latest ideas, thinking and information
- sent to you in electronic format for ease of sharing amongst colleagues
- subscriptions are available for all curriculum updates or for individual titles.

Subscription rates 2026/27

Hampshire funded schools

£317 for all curriculum updates to be received electronically.
£63 per individual title to be received electronically.

Other schools and settings

£418 (plus VAT) for all curriculum updates to be received electronically.
£69 (plus VAT) per individual title to be received electronically.

How to subscribe:

Please see the link: Curriculum updates | Hampshire Services for Schools

Here you will be able to purchase the subscription once logged in to your Hampshire Services for Schools account. There is also guidance for those who do not yet have an account.

Once you have subscribed, the Curriculum Updates will be emailed to you when they are published. Alternatively, you will be able to access the publication via HIAS Moodle subject sites using your school's Moodle login.

© Hampshire County Council 2026