Case Study: Barnham C of E Primary School, Suffolk

Background

Barnham Primary School is in a small village three miles south of Thetford. There are 165 pupils in the school, of whom around one third come from Barnham and two thirds from Thetford; the teacher explained that some parents choose Barnham instead of the schools in Thetford because it is a Church of England school and has a good reputation. It was rated Good by OFSTED in 2017. Most of the children are White British and there are some children from Polish and Portuguese families. Around 10% of pupils are eligible for Free School Meals.

Next to the school is the internationally-important Paleolithic site which is being excavated by the British Museum, where 400,000 year old flint tools have been found. Nearby is an Iron Age hill fort. St Gregory’s church dates from the 13th century and some of the houses in the village are from the 17th century. The windmill and railway station were used until the mid-20th century, so Barnham is rich in heritage. West Stow Anglo Saxon Village is five miles away, and Year 4 pupils visit it when they study the Anglo Saxons.

Year 4 pupil’s visit to Barnham Paleolithic site

Barnham Primary’s involvement with Heritage Schools

The Year 4 teacher attended the Heritage Schools CPD which the Heritage Schools Local Heritage Education Manager (LHEM) delivered to teachers in the Breckland Council area at The Ancient House Museum in Thetford in 2019. This session covered how to use historic maps and aerial photographs to find out how a locality has developed over time, how to use the local built heritage and how to research the soldiers named on war memorials.

The LHEM then delivered a CPD session to all the teachers and governors at Barnham Primary, as the school was in the process of designing a new curriculum. The LHEM provided support to make a focus on local heritage a key part of the curriculum, across the subject areas.
October 2021, Barnham Primary started using the CUSP (Curriculum with Unity Schools Partnership)\(^1\) curriculum; the staff and governors had found it difficult to ensure that their new curriculum would be fully cross-curricular, so using an already-existing curriculum meant that this requirement was met. Nevertheless, Barnham Primary is ensuring that they will use local history units within CUSP to build on the Heritage Schools training, skills and knowledge already received. They will seek further advice from the LHEM about integrating local heritage into CUSP in all the subject areas.

The archivist from the nearby Euston Estate also attended the CPD session at the school and shared information about the history of the estate. The Estate Manager is the Chair of Governors. Euston Hall, the home of the Dukes of Grafton, dates from 1666 (although there had been an earlier hall on the site) and the estate covers 10,500 acres, so it forms a significant part of the local landscape and economy. The archivist has been into school several times to tell pupils about Euston Hall, and has talked to the Year 6 class about being an archivist as a career.

Using some of the resources from the CPD session held at The Ancient House Museum, the Year 3 pupils researched the names of the soldiers commemorated on the Barnham war memorial, and found out from census records where they had lived in the village.

“This was really powerful, standing where the soldiers stood and where they walked and lived” - Teacher

**Barnham Primary School’s Timeline**

![The completed timeline](image-url)

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\(^1\) [https://www.unity-curriculum.co.uk/](https://www.unity-curriculum.co.uk/)
One of the aims of Heritage Schools is that pupils should understand the links between local, national and international history. Barnham Primary received a Heritage Schools grant to work with an artist, Nicola Marray-Woods, to create a timeline which would show how people and events in local, national and international history were connected. The aim was to involve the whole school community to create a valuable learning resource which would also serve to promote and celebrate the children’s interest in both history and art by using their drawings to create a 10 metre long timeline featuring key historical figures, major events and significant achievements from prehistoric times to the present day.

Each class began by using books and iPads to research images from the areas of the History curriculum which they had studied in class. Later in the term, they drew additional pictures to depict important local events, such as the foundation of St Gregory’s church, the discoveries made at the Barnham dig and the building of the Euston Estate as well as further national and international historical figures and events.

The national and international topics covered on the timeline are: Ancient Egypt, Ancient Greece, Romans, Mayans, Anglo Saxons, Vikings, British monarchs, World War II and the Windrush Generation. The significance of the role played by leading women and men of colour has been championed both on a local and international scale, with pictures of Mary Seacole, Emperor Severus, Boudicca, Duleep Singh, Gandhi, Walter Tull and Queen Elizabeth II. The timeline is made more diverse by adding people not covered by the History topics which the pupils were studying: Gandhi; the Suffragettes (to raise aspirations for girls); May Jemmison (the first African American astronaut) and Tim Peake.
The artist used these drawings and painted the timeline on an external classroom wall. Local events and historical figures are on a blue background, national on a green and international on a yellow background to help children to see the events in context and to make links between and across periods, thus increasing their chronological understanding.

Since the timeline was created, Barnham Primary has been using Lifting Limits\(^2\) in PSHE lessons, which are resources to encourage gender equality in schools and in wider society. As a result, more women will be added to the timeline.

**Impacts on the pupils**

“Doing the timeline has raised the profile of History, it's been really good to raise the children's aspirations. It gave them a real buzz to work alongside a professional artist. They loved that she was so excited by their work, it raised their self-esteem and encouraged some to be artists. There was always a gang of children around her when she was working. It was uplifting for everyone” - Teacher

The pupils walk past the timeline every time they go out into the playground. They often talk to each other about it, and who did which drawing. The timeline acts as a permanent reminder for what each year group has studied, so pupils can look back on it as a reminder and younger pupils can see what they will study in future years.

In discussion with 12 of the pupils from Years 3 to 6, they said that the timeline helped them understand chronology and see how local, national and international events were related.

\(^2\) [https://liftinglimits.org.uk/]
“I liked learning about local history and using Digimaps to find out how Barnham has changed – this [the school site] used to be a field” - Year 6 pupil

Almost all the pupils said that creating the timeline had made them more interested in History; a few of them said that they had already been very interested in History so their interest had not increased.

Some of the pupils said that they had enjoyed the Art aspect of creating the timeline.

“I learned drawing skills from Nicola. I wasn’t very good before and now I like it better”
Year 5 pupil

“You could use your imagination and be creative” - Year 5 pupil

All the Year 4 pupils gave some written feedback about the timeline project: who, or what, was the most interesting person or event they had learned about, and why that person or event was interesting. 11 of them chose something from local history, eight national and five international. Those who were most interested in local history wrote about the former railway station in Barnham, and the visit to West Stow Anglo Saxon Village.

“I enjoyed doing the railway in Barnham because it sounds interesting and very cool in life. The railway was down the road at Station Road. Left over is metal lines. I like history because it’s like learning the past” - Year 4 pupil

“I enjoyed the trip to West Stow and learning about the Anglo Saxons because it was really fun handling the really cool artefacts like the fossil and jaw bone and the iron knife which they even gave to children. I found out that they made door keys out of red deer antler and fossilised sea urchins were used as amulets” - Year 4 pupil

The pupils who preferred national history wrote about the Romans and Vikings.

“The Vikings travelled so far and did so much. They were good farmers and blacksmiths and raiders! They were really clever and advanced” - Year 4 pupil

Those who preferred international history found the Indus Valley and Ancient Egypt interesting.

“I found the Ancient Egypt pyramids interesting because they are tall and cool. And all the pyramids had new pyramids every new Pharaoh. When we started to learn about Egypt my emotion went from unhappy to happy. I love learning about Egypt” - Year 4 pupil

3 https://digimapforschools.edina.ac.uk/
**Impacts on Barnham Primary School**

The teachers have found the map skills from the CPD session very effective to help the pupils understand how places have changed over time. They started with present-day maps and worked back through time, looking for shapes (made by roads, for example) on the maps of different periods to anchor locations. Using two or three photographs of local buildings and deciding which is newest and which is oldest has been a successful way for the pupils to understand chronological sequencing.

The LHEM’s support with developing Barnham Primary’s new curriculum from 2019 enabled the school to embed local heritage across all the subjects. The school is now using the CUSP curriculum, and will seek further support from the LHEM to build local heritage into it.

The school would not have been able to do the timeline project with a professional artist without the grant from Heritage Schools. The school’s budget is very stretched and a project like this could not have been afforded from the school’s own resources.

Barnham Primary will soon receive an inspection from Suffolk County Council’s Schools Excellence Officer. Head teachers can choose an area of strength for the inspection, and History and Geography have been chosen because of the benefits which have resulted from Heritage Schools and the high quality of teaching, learning and attainment in these subjects.

**Impacts on the community**

The CPD session which the LHEM held in school increased the school governors’ interest in local history and strengthened links with the local history society. This resulted in the church inviting the school to create an exhibition for the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee. The LHEM provided photographs and information about each of the decades of the Queen’s reign, and the pupils used these as inspiration to create artworks. The congregation was very impressed with the exhibition and the school’s involvement. The teacher commented that he would not have been able to find the range of sources which the LHEM provided, and that her support was invaluable for this.

**Summary**

Before Barnham Primary School became involved with Heritage Schools, pupils already learned about some local history and the school has a long-standing connection with the Euston Hall Estate and the Paleolithic archaeology dig. The knowledge, skills and resources which the LHEM provided through the initial CPD session for the Breckland schools and then the bespoke CPD at Barnham Primary has given the teachers more skills for teaching History and Geography and for using local heritage across the curriculum, which has enabled the pupils to learn about their local heritage in more depth. The school governors attended the CPD training at Barnham Primary too, and this has increased their interest in local heritage and has resulted in stronger links with local businesses and community organisations, for example the Platinum Jubilee exhibition in the church.
Creating the timeline was a very effective way to link the whole school’s study of aspects of local history with the other national and international history topics which they have studied. Enabling pupils to make this connection between local, national and international history is one of the aims of Heritage Schools. The timeline could not have been created without the Heritage Schools grant, and the LHEM had suggested Nicola Marray-Woods as the artist.

The pupils very much enjoyed working with a professional artist and for many of them, this experience has increased their drawing skills and enthusiasm for art. Some of the pupils are now interested in a career as an artist. The Euston Hall archivist’s visits to the school have made the pupils aware of the possibility of being an archivist for a career.

Barnham Primary has reviewed its curriculum over the last three years, and the LHEM has provided advice and support with integrating local history and heritage across all the subjects so that they are a focus of the pupils’ learning. History and Geography are strong, and have been chosen as the subjects for the Schools Excellence inspection as a result of the Heritage Schools input.

The school is proud to have received its Heritage Schools Award which it received at the formal launch of the timeline.