

## **Case Study: Mayflower Primary School, Leicester**

### **Background**

This community school has a mix of boys and girls from a predominantly Asian background, with the majority of pupils (80%) not having English as a first language.

For a couple of years now the school has been actively involved in doing a variety of different Heritage School projects across different year groups.

The school is very open to seizing educational opportunities offered by external providers that will engage their pupils in creative and interesting ways; they participate in international inter-school music, art and comedy events, staff go on exchange visits to schools abroad to share ideas with teachers from other countries and the school regularly has artists, actors and musicians into school to work with their pupils.

Heritage Schools is just one of many external providers they work with to provide an enhanced and enriching experience to inspire and engage their pupils.

The school does heritage walks with pupils, studies aspects of the local areas and important local historic characters, has made films about local history events, interviewed people in the local community and looks to incorporate celebrating local heritage anniversaries into the curriculum.

There is recognition that many pupils in the school (due to the awareness, experiences and background of their parents) will only access the varied experiences and the cultural richness this offers if the school itself provides this.

*“The children in this community their families are not able to provide as rich an experiences as you might want, they are not going to be taken to the museum at the weekend, a few but a lot of them will only gain that experience by what we give to them”*

This case study focusses on just one of these Heritage Schools projects which was their involvement in a Suffragette rally.

### **Year 3 Suffragette project**

Alice Hawkins was a leading Suffragette who worked and campaigned in Leicester; in February this year a statue was unveiled to her in the city centre.

The Local Heritage Education Manager (LHEM) who the school works closely with on all aspects of their local heritage studies ran a city-wide training course on democracy and the rule of law which was attended by Year 3 and 6 teachers from the school. The training included talking about suffrage, showing teachers various places in the city centre associated with suffrage movement and how to integrate this into school.

*“Ismail [LHEM] is a facilitator ... it [CPD training] was an inspiration”*

Following this training Year 3 had done work about Alice Hawkins and votes for women which included Peter Barry the great grandson of Alice Hawkins coming into school to talk to all the pupils in Key Stage 2.



Subsequently in July, to mark the centenary of women's suffrage and celebrate 90 years to the day since the Equal Franchise Act gave equal voting rights to women the LHEM offered the school an opportunity to participate in a flash mob march into the city centre congregating around the statue of Alice Hawkins.

*"Ismail [LHEM] got in touch about the flash mob on Monday and I just thought we have to do it. We chopped and changed our long term plans so we could take part"*

To make the most of the opportunity the lessons planned for the week were changed at very short notice. Year 3 spent the week writing Suffragette speeches with all the ideas being amalgamated into a single speech to be presented by two of the pupils at the rally itself.

The writing work built on their existing history knowledge and incorporated practicing persuasive writing and speech writing. The event itself helped motivate pupils to produce work of a very high standard.

*"Because they knew that the speeches they wrote, either part of it or all of it would be spoken to an audience they had a real purpose to it; they were so enthusiastic"*

The week covered elements of the creative curriculum with pupils making banners in art, and in music lessons a local actor came in as Alice Hawkins to do a speech to all the children in character and taught the whole school various Suffragette songs.

*"[Elaine Pantling – actor makes it] Real, tangible and inspiring"*

Even though the school was limited in the numbers that could attend the Flash Mob itself and it was only Year 3 who spent the whole week doing work in preparation for the event, the school still found ways to involve and engage all the pupils in learning about voting and citizenship through this local hero.

*"Only ten year 3 were going [on the flash mob] but we wanted the whole school to be involved in this centenary"*

The pupils selected to attend the rally and flash mob travelled to the city centre on public transport by bus and were joined by other schools along the route. They were dressed in period costume, carried the banners they had made and sang the Suffragette songs they had learnt on the way; much to the surprise and delight of the other bus passengers! The pupils then marched into the city centre to join other schools, members of the public and local dignitaries for a rally.

### Alice Hawkins Flashmob

Posted on July 2, 2018 by Mrs Boydton



Two pupils, one girl from each class were selected from an audition in school, co-presented the speech that everyone in Year 3 had contributed to in front of a large throng of people attending the rally in the city centre. They were the youngest people to deliver a speech.

The photograph below shows the two girls from Mayflower School delivering their speech with Peter Barry the great grandson of Alice Hawkins and Elaine Pantling dressed as Alice Hawkins sharing the stage with them.



*“We had two children present it [amalgamated speech] on Monday, it was amazing ... it was so moving”*

The event featured in the local paper the Leicester Mercury and also on the local TV Central News.

## Impacts of the heritage project

Working towards and then attending the event generated a huge level of positivity. The school (staff and pupils) were still buzzing with excitement the week after the event.

*“The Suffragette March on Monday was brilliant”*

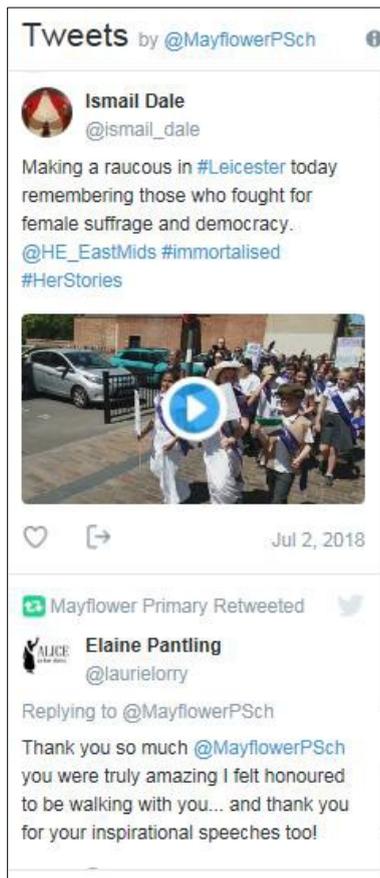
The project covered a wide range of curriculum subjects with pupils learning about history, citizenship, democracy and equality through their active participation in the rally.

*“It was an everything project ... it does cover drama, music, art, English, citizenship, democracy, history”*

*“We took boys with us [on the rally] and explained that men would have supported it, especially Alice Hawkins’ husband who was incredibly supportive and looked after their children whilst she went out”*

In the build up to writing their speeches pupils discussed the roles of men and women; with many coming from very traditional Muslim households the conversation itself led to pupils being exposed to other ideas, sometimes getting them to challenge their perceptions about what males and females can or can’t do. This was further emphasised by the speeches given on the day.

During the rally itself the pupils listened to a range of speeches and took away ideas of being an active citizen.



*“On the day the lady councillor was saying take from this into the future the fight for injustice, she tried to make it relevant that there is still a fight going on and you have got the power as young people to change everything which is really nice, she tried to bring it up to date”*

*“This will have a huge impact on things like citizenship, they will see marches on the news and they will think I have done that and therefore I can do it again. It is active citizenship, that was in costume and being someone else but they have experience what it is like carrying a placard and shouting down the street as part of your rights and the democratic process, something that these children wouldn’t normally do”*



With all auditioning their speeches in front of their classmates, giving them the chance of public speaking, pupils developed in their confidence to perform in front of others. The two pupils who were selected to do the speech in public visibly grew in their confidence as a result of taking part in the rally.

*“The confidence they showed, at 8 years old to stand in front of a crowd with a microphone and address hundreds of people, it was really moving, they are so little and so young, I was so proud of them how they have progressed in Year 3; I can’t imagine them doing at the beginning of Year 3. They were the youngest speakers there and I thought you’ve got real courage to stand up there and do it”*

Participation had a powerful impact not just on the pupils but also parents and teachers who attended.

*“There were parents there and they were filling up”*

*“We felt good and proud [afterwards]. My Mum came and she gave me a big hug and a kiss and she had tears in her eyes” - pupil*

*“Such a moving and amazing speech, the girls both spoke very confidently and with great expression. Being the youngest girls to read out their speeches, they represented Mayflower really well. Had me in tears too! Well done Fatima and Maryam and a huge thank you to Miss Atkins for giving the girls this amazing opportunity to shine!” – parent via school twitter feed*

*“A special well done to the ten children that joined the march. Your singing and enthusiasm was wonderful! Fatimah and Maryam, wow! What a passionate speech. You had me in tears! We are all very proud of you!” - teacher*

The importance of the LHEM in facilitating the event can’t be understated; the pupils had an engaging and enriching experience, learning about the past and their local history but also lessons around citizenship and equality through their active participation.

*“He [LHEM] is good at reminding us of anniversaries that are coming up and getting us in touch with people ... the flash mob we wouldn’t have known about, we would have still talked about the Suffragettes but it wouldn’t have had the wow factor”*

The principle underpinning Heritage Schools, of studying local history as a way into learning about the bigger national story, is clearly demonstrated in this and other local Heritage School projects the school has done. This approach helps generate pupils’ interest as well as helping them better understand the issues by starting with things that they recognise.

*“Finding the local history and make it live is so much more purposeful and impactful for all of us ... we look at Alice Hawkins and Arthur Wakerley they are real local heroes and heroines, so instead of looking at footballers or celebrities, in this area you have a man and a woman who were humanitarians, revolutionaries, they changed stuff; it’s a much more worthwhile and encompassing view on what a hero is”*

## Summary

The school took a creative approach to build on what they had already done when this unexpected, one-off and never to be repeated again opportunity to take part in a wider public event presented itself. Involvement provided an engaging week of cross-curricular work which through active participation taught empowering lessons about equality, citizenship, democracy and the fight against injustice.

When asked to describe a single mental snapshot that would sum up the project, the image chosen by the teacher reflects the impacts being involved in Heritage Schools and seizing the (sometime unexpected) opportunities can have on pupils.

*“Two children, especially one of them who is a very quiet child, belting it out in front of the people of Leicester was amazing and he [LHEM] facilitated that ... I was really impressed because they are very young”*

For the teacher and many of the pupils this project was the highlight of their school year and one which will be remembered by them for a long time.

None of this would have happened without the LHEM and the contacts and connections he has.

A video with a background about Alice Hawkins and showing the involvement of the 450 pupils from different schools across Leicester in the flash mob anniversary event can be seen here, with a clip of the rousing speech made by the two pupils from Mayflower School starting at 11 minutes <https://vimeo.com/287452775>

This Case Study was produced by Qa Research, an independent full-service social and market research agency commissioned by Historic England to evaluate their Heritage Schools Programme.