

Case Study: William Patten Primary School, Stoke Newington, London

Background

William Patten Primary School is a culturally and socially diverse school, with 41 languages spoken amongst its pupils. Some have moved to the area recently, and some pupils' families have lived there for several generations. Most children live within walking distance of the school. There are two classes in each year group and 460 pupils in total.

The Humanities Co-ordinator had attended the Hackney Humanities Forum where the Heritage Schools' Local Heritage Education Manager (LHEM) had given a presentation about Heritage Schools in 2016/17.

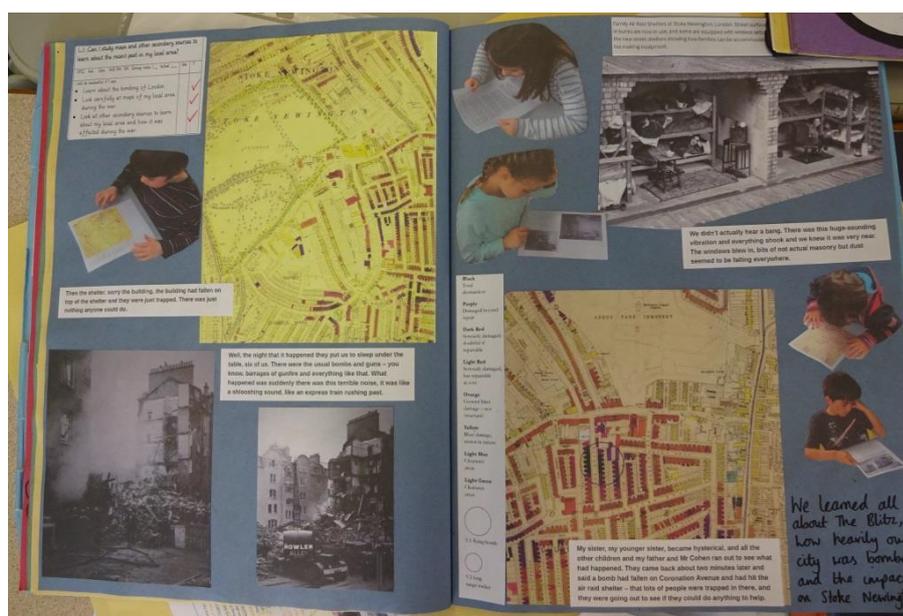
For the 2017/18 academic year, the head teacher of William Patten Primary School had an idea for a whole-school heritage project, and this idea was developed with the help of the LHEM. The LHEM spent some time researching the school's log books to create a teaching resource from them, sourced a number of objects and created topic boxes about different subjects, and suggested other organisations which could contribute to the heritage project.

She also provided training in school for all the teachers about using maps and censuses, and suggested places which pupils could visit and former residents of Stoke Newington whom they could study, from Mary Wollstonecraft and Daniel Defoe to Frank Bostock the circus lion tamer.

The whole-school heritage project

The project took place over a three week period, studying a different era each week:

- Prehistory, Invaders and Settlers, small villages – 43AD-1799
- Transformation from sleepy village to London suburb – 1800-1899
- The 20th century and beyond



Stoke Newington during World War II

Within the project there were six themes which each year group covered:

- Immigration and the diversifying community
- Significant people and places
- Arts and literature
- Social reform and education
- Work and leisure
- Local buildings and architecture

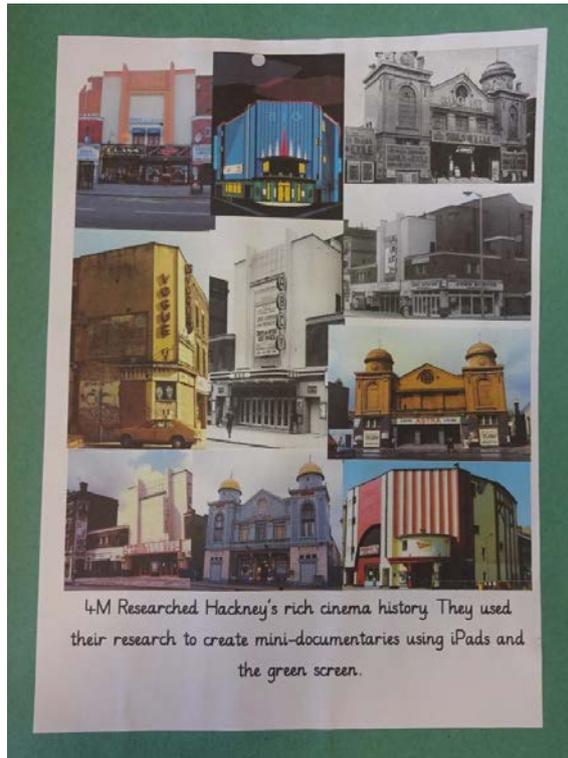
The project included visits to places in the local area, a Victorian school workshop in the school hall (the school was built in 1892), a visit from Geffrye Museum staff who led object handling sessions, a circus skills workshop and visits from former pupils, who talked about their experiences at the school. The children devised questions based on the research they had done on the school log books, and they interviewed the former pupils who had attended from the 1920s onwards. Their responses showed how their experiences of the school had changed over time. The film (made by one of the parents) is here: <https://vimeo.com/275049742/9a1fd186fb>

The school had done whole-school projects about other subjects before, but never one based on heritage and the support from Heritage Schools gave the teachers the skills and knowledge to run this successful project. The school often invites visitors to talk about other subjects, such as people from the Science Museum, authors and artists, and the teachers have seen the benefits to the pupils of being able to hear from experts about their experiences first hand. The visitors are role models and can give the pupils ideas for future careers. The number of visitors coming into school for the heritage project was one of its strengths; the project was publicised in the school's bi-weekly newsletter and many family members and former pupils offered to take part, thus strengthening links between the school and families and the local community.

Several parents and grandparents of pupils helped deliver the heritage project. A grandparent who is a transport historian gave a talk about the development of the London Underground, and a parent who is an artist and local historian created a poster based on The Beatles' Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band album cover, featuring famous people who have lived in Stoke Newington, and some contemporary residents. Another parent devised a walk to look for architectural features on buildings, and another who is an arts specialist with expertise in the history of the textile trade told the pupils about the local textile industry. The Rio Cinema gave a private viewing of the film about the former pupils talking about the school. This film will be a resource for pupils at the school in future years.



Poster created by a parent to support the project, of significant Stoke Newington residents



Researching cinema history

Impacts

The most significant impacts of the heritage project have been the children's enthusiasm for learning, the involvement of their families, increased links with community organisations, and strengthening the school's use of whole-school projects and inviting visitors into the school to share their knowledge and experience. In addition, the teachers have gained skills and resources which they will use in their teaching in the future, and the school has gained its Heritage Schools Award.

Eight Key Stage 2 pupils took part in an evaluation discussion about the project in the summer term. They all said that they had enjoyed the project and most of them said that it had changed their opinion about Stoke Newington a lot. For example, one pupil said:

"Before the heritage project I did not know a lot about Stoke Newington and now I am really proud of living in an area that has such an interesting background"

One of the teachers commented that the pupils were proud that past residents of the area had stood up for social reform, such as the Newington Green Dissenters and slavery abolitionists.

The heritage project has been very effective in enthusing pupils about Stoke Newington's past and strengthening links with families. Many pupils did research at home and brought objects from home into school. As outlined in the section above, several parents and grandparents were very involved in delivering particular aspects of the project.

"Parents say they have never seen their children so motivated about learning history before"

"This project has embedded the families in the children's learning. It has empowered the families to know that they can use their knowledge in their children's learning"

Although the pupils had learned something about the local area in the past during geography lessons, the heritage project gave them a much greater insight. During the evaluation discussion one said:

“It was amazing to learn about Mary Wollstonecraft. When I go past where she had a school, it’s amazing to think that Mary Wollstonecraft might have stood in this exact spot. I really like to have that relationship with people who used to live here”

Being able to handle real objects also had a big impact on the pupils. One child had brought in a World War II ration book with a bullet hole in it; it had saved the owner’s life.

“We could see what a ration book actually looked like, rather than looking at pictures on the internet”

The former pupils (some of whom are now members of staff) coming into school to talk about their school experiences has helped them understand how changes take place over time:

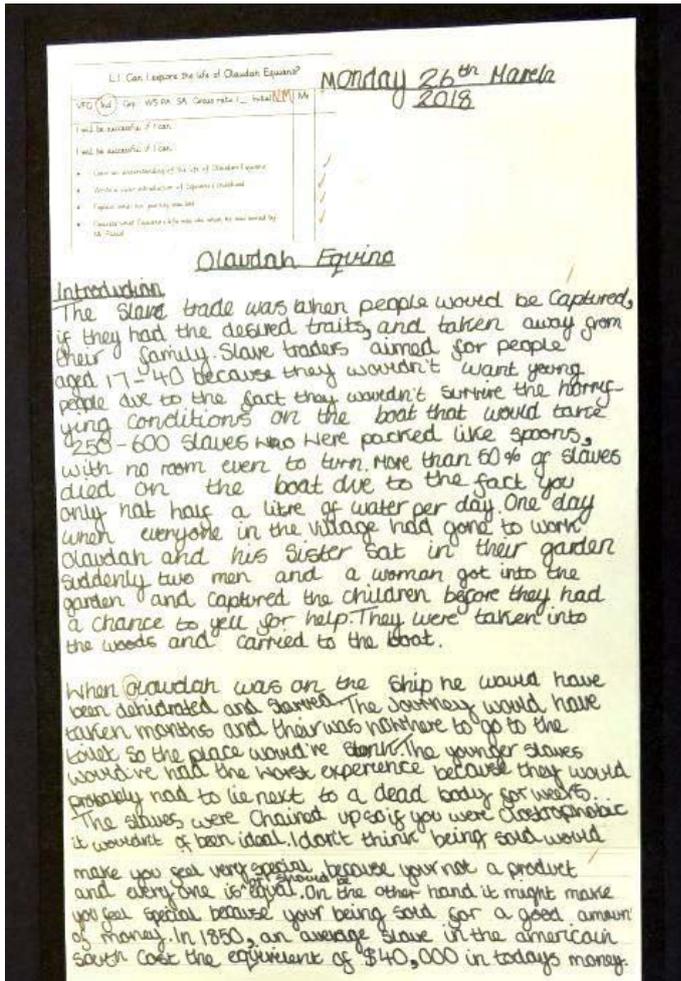
“The pupils could make distinctions between different eras in the past, rather than just “this is the past, this is the present.” It helps them understand that even the past has evolved”

One of the former pupils talked about being evacuated from Stoke Newington to a farm during World War II. This experience resonated with some of the pupils:

“We can find out about how people suffered in World War II, and what it was like to be evacuated to a farm. It was such a contrast to London”

“I could make a lot of connections with them and with my relatives who went through the war”

The teachers considered that the cross-curricular aspects of the project were very effective, including extended writing (for example news reports about Frank Bostock’s circus and descriptive writing about Olaudah Equiano and the slave trade), writing poetry with a local poet, and experiencing a Victorian lesson in their Victorian school. Pupils used maps to see how the area had developed over time. They also extended their existing ICT skills, using a number of apps to research and present their findings, such as using a green screen to create a documentary about the development of cinemas in the area, Popplet for mind maps and Comic Life for graphic stories.



Writing about Olaudah Equiano



Using the green screen to create a documentary

Local businesses have been very involved in the project, with the Rio Cinema giving a behind the scenes tour and a private view of the film of the former pupils' interviews. The poster of Stoke Newington residents was displayed in the barber's shop window and other shops were involved in the pupil's study of the development of trade in the town. This has helped the pupils feel more part of the local community.

The school is proud to have achieved the Heritage Schools award and is planning to continue their work with Heritage Schools. Following the success of the project, the school has implemented a 'blocked curriculum', when all pupils study a particular topic. This approach is enabling further project based learning, sparking each child's curiosity and developing their interest throughout each topic, whilst also enabling the achievement of depth in knowledge and skills as was observed during the heritage project.

Summary

William Patten Primary had carried out a number of whole-school projects in the past, but never one about local heritage. The LHEM's advice and support helped them to work up their original ideas for a heritage project into one which was very successful, and Heritage Schools has provided training and resources which the teachers will be able to use in future years.

The school has often invited visitors into school to cover different subjects, but never with a heritage focus. The LHEM was able to suggest people and organisations to invite, in addition to the former pupils whom the school could contact.

As a result of the project, pupils have increased their pride in and understanding of Stoke Newington, and of people who have lived there in the past. The influential people they have learned about can inspire them in the future. The heritage project has strengthened the school's links with families and the local community. The teachers consider that the involvement with Heritage Schools has greatly enhanced the heritage project and enabled them to develop their original ideas very effectively.

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.