



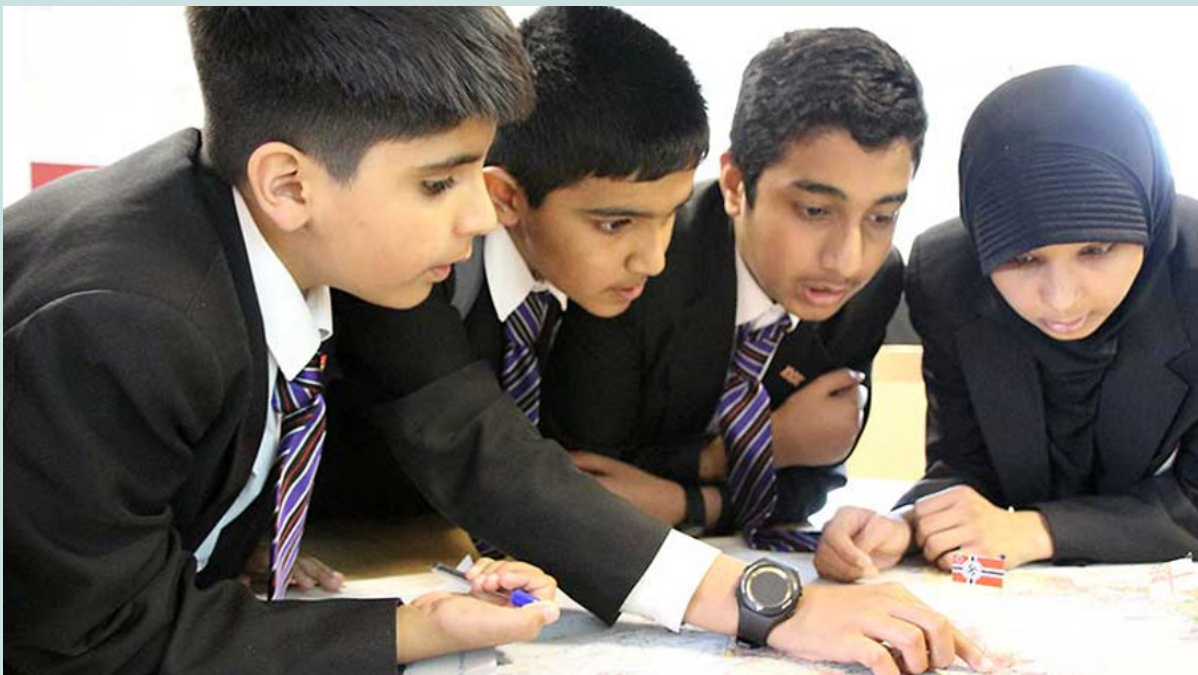
CASE STUDY

Sandford Award Criteria 4

There is attention to good management and administration concerning all aspects of the visit

The learning team at Bletchley Park adapt workshop content and the teaching resources used to accommodate the individual needs of teachers and pupils

Bletchley Park, Buckinghamshire



Bletchley Park was the wartime home of Britain's Government Code and Cipher School, part of the Secret Intelligence Service which played a decisive role in the outcome of the Second World War by decrypting the secret communications of the Axis Powers. Perhaps best known for breaking the Enigma and Lorenz ciphers, the official historian of British intelligence has argued that operations at Bletchley shortened the war by at least two years. The site is based on a late-nineteenth century mansion and estate near Milton Keynes.

The Session: 'Interception to Intelligence': D-Day workshop - KS2

Bletchley Park guided tour

The strong interpersonal skills of the tour guide, who bristled with enthusiasm for the site and its heritage, was the decisive factor in successfully capturing students' attention and interest during this initial part of the visit. They quickly established a friendly and positive rapport with the group and were able to impart their clear fascination with the history of British intelligence during the 1940s as they took students to various outdoor locations, ranging from the Mansion to the site of the former NAFFI. Focusing part of the tour on the experiences of a young female recruit to Bletchley Park was very effective in developing students' ability to empathise with historical figures.

'Interception to Intelligence: D-Day' workshop

Cracking the Enigma code

Students responded keenly to the challenge of translating a Morse code message played at reduced speed into text. The demonstration of how Morse is transmitted using a key from the 1940s lent the activity greater historical authenticity. However, it was the use of a real enigma machine from the Second World War in a practical demonstration of how the Germans encrypted their communications that captivated the visiting group. They were completely engaged in the workshop leader's demonstration, exhibiting a remarkably sophisticated grasp of the complexities of deciphering intercepted messages.

Team working and problem solving: Operation Neptune codebreaker challenge

The learning resources created for the final part of this workshop were extremely effective in capturing students' imaginations as they were instructed to work as teams of 'codebreakers' to decipher an authentic message relating to Operation Neptune. The workshop leader's annotation of a blackboard displaying a chalk outline of southern Britain and northern France with the information students had deciphered provided a powerful conclusion to this activity, vividly illustrating the importance of Bletchley's contribution to the eventual liberation of German-occupied Western Europe.

Adapting delivery to students' abilities

The workshop leader had obviously been briefed on the group's ability level and the extent of their prior learning and they adapted their delivery accordingly, ensuring that they reviewed with students the conceptual framework required to understand fully the subject matter they were delivering.

The careful pacing of each activity involved in the workshop helped to maintain a strong and purposeful momentum to students' learning, while the use of background period

music while the group worked in teams to decode messages created a 1940s ambience. The plenary phase of the workshop, where the messages students translated were used to annotate a map of northern France, was an ideal way of drawing the group's learning together and consolidating their understanding of the site's importance during the war.

The thoughtful and considered questions asked by visiting students at the end of the second workshop reflected a desire to discover more about the role of British intelligence during the Second World War that had been cultivated by their experiences at Bletchley Park.

What impressed the Sandford Award Judge?

Website information

'The learning pages of Bletchley Park's website provide prospective visitors with comprehensive, well-organised and accessible information on the educational programme accessed via a user-friendly interface. The categorisation of the available workshops according to key stages supports teachers in identifying age-appropriate activities while the frequently asked questions page provides clear guidance on the main issues that arise in planning an educational visit. Making a range of documents available online, from the site's risk assessment for educational visits to its safeguarding policy and a detailed site map, supports schools in planning their day, enabling them to maximise the learning that takes place during the self-guided part of their visit.'

Initial enquiries and bookings

'A well-established procedure is in place for dealing with initial enquiries and bookings through the site's Visit Coordinator staff who liaise with group leaders in order to identify a provisional date for a visit. This date is subsequently confirmed on completion of an online booking form by the school which is designed to gather information regarding any special educational needs or mobility issues that may exist within the visiting group. This form also affords group leaders the opportunity to indicate where their visit to Bletchley Park occurs within the scheme of work they are teaching and the subsequent level of knowledge and understanding their students will possess when they come to the site. The learning team base their planning for each visit around the information collated on a group's booking form and will differentiate workshop content and the teaching resources used to accommodate individual needs.'

Pre and post-visit learning resources

'A week before a visit is due to take place groups receive a detailed schedule for their day which includes a link to a very helpful package of pre- and post-visit learning resources, such as the excellent 'Cryptography Skills Activity Pack'. This is accompanied by a series of teachers' notes offering guidance on how these resources can be used in the classroom. There is also a series of activity booklets and teachers' notes available to help schools to structure their self-guided time at the site most effectively.'

'The timing of both the tour and workshop was carefully managed and adhered to the visit itinerary. Members of the learning team were fully familiar with the format of the visit, reflected in the seamless transitions between each activity. The lead teacher planned to consolidate students' understanding on their return to school by using the online resources provided by the site to follow up their visit.'