



CASE STUDY

Sandford Award Criteria 4

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

National Civil War Centre, Nottinghamshire



The National Civil War Centre opened its doors in 2015 to tell the story of the British Civil Wars and how they shaped the modern world. Supported by funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Newark and Sherwood District Council, the Centre became the first museum to tell the whole story of the seventeenth century wars using artefacts that are relevant to the national and the local context. The Centre occupies a converted Regency schoolroom and restored Tudor Hall behind the museum, as well as temporary exhibition spaces in the Georgian schoolmaster's house. A new glass and steel entrance unites the buildings.

What impressed the Sandford Award Judge?

Booking process

‘The visits are managed and delivered by the Learning and Participation Team Leader in the first instance, either by email or phone. There is a booking enquiry form on the museum’s website. Teachers can either complete this to start the booking process, or email or phone to make a provisional booking. Once the dates and workshops have been finalised, a letter of confirmation is emailed, along with additional information: FAQs, maps and plans, session details/timetable, risk assessment guidance, and pre-visit lesson plans where appropriate. Preliminary visits are encouraged during the booking process.’

Welcome and orientation

‘The welcome and orientation were effective and well planned. The Learning Facilitators welcomed the school at the door to the Centre and took them to their lunch room to leave their belongings. The facilitators gave key information and also asked the pupils what they had already learnt about the Civil Wars, and then lead the groups to their learning spaces.’

Facilities and staffing

‘The facilities are excellent with a bespoke activities space and other well-planned areas that lend themselves to learning activities and to the storage of school bags. Although there are members of the public on-site during school visits, their sessions are carefully timetabled to ensure that all visitors receive and engage with the best possible learning experiences. Their presence did not interfere with the pupils’ experience.’

‘Staffing of the sessions observed was appropriate and well organised. The Centre does not use volunteers to deliver their sessions. Well-briefed freelancers are used on occasion to facilitate particularly large groups. Each freelance facilitator has been observed by the Team Leader for Learning and Participation as part of an ongoing monitoring programme.’

Meeting schools’ individual needs

‘Particular attention is paid to the management of an individual school’s needs. For special schools or groups with specific needs, the team invite teachers to walk around the site with them so that the visit can be tailored in detail in advance.’