



CASE STUDY

Sandford Award Criteria 1

The education programmes are delivered in a way that engages, informs and inspires visitors.

Find out how the learning team at Sulgrave Manor engage pupils in sessions that reinforce the idea that real people with real-life challenges once lived in the manor house.

Sulgrave Manor, Northamptonshire



Sulgrave Manor is a Tudor and Georgian house built by the direct ancestors of the first President of the United States of America, George Washington. The adjoining, dedicated education areas were constructed with a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (now the National Lottery Heritage Fund) and are, architecturally and in use of building materials, sympathetic to the earlier structures.

Session Description: Rich and Poor in Tudor England – Key Stage 2

‘What was it like to live at Sulgrave Manor during the 16th century? Explore the manor and use replica objects to investigate how life was different for the Washington family and the people who served them.’

What impressed the Sandford Award Judge?

‘The two female education staff members, dressed as house servants, introduced themselves before demonstrating and explaining their clothing ... [role play costumes were used to dress two of the pupils] as a Tudor period boy and girl, to show fastenings (laces, hooks and few buttons) in contrast with zips and Velcro.

The use of the ideas of ‘then and now’, ‘changes over time’, ‘cause and effect’ enabled group members to use the knowledge of today’s world to compare and understand the costumes of the Tudor servants. This included ease or otherwise of cleaning linen and wool - use of buckets rather than washing machines. This approach was integrated with age-appropriate language, vocabulary extension and practice in Listening and Speaking and the planned use of cross-curricular subjects (art, dance, music, science, technology with personal, social and health education ever present).’

Challenges, questioning and roleplay

‘Challenges were issued, discussed and explored - “I am a servant, my bodice is laced up the front. If my bodice was laced up the back would that suggest anything to you?”. Further questions caused the idea that you would be rich and have a servant. By means of such challenges, questioning and asking for volunteers to play parts, every group member played an individual role during the session. Good practice.

Within the presentation there were introductions to the tableware of the rich and the poor, the foods eaten by both - with knives and fingers, gradual introduction of foreign foods following exploration of faraway lands.’

Curriculum links to local and national heritage

‘ ... there is very good practice in the interweaving of local events with relevant national events. The idea that in Tudor times the effects of great national events would not have impinged on the lives of the servants at Sulgrave Manor was well explained.

The idea of power and kingship was introduced early in the history story of the Tudor dynasty and was carefully explained and reinforced in context throughout. Successive Tudor monarchs - alongside Prince Arthur, the Lady Jane Grey and successive court and political personalities - were introduced with something of their roles and influences explained. In every case, a pupil played the part of the personality being studied (each carrying a contemporary portrait of their character).

Skillful use of sufficient historic events gave enough knowledge for pupils' overall understanding of aspects of the period for example, the need for an heir and preferably a male heir ... even when the more difficult substantial concepts were being explained there was no loss of interest, so good and focused were the examples and the language and vocabulary used.'

Variety of learning experience

'A session with Early Music musicians (all staff members or volunteers) enabled the singing of authentic Tudor period songs and a simple dance accompanied by a recorder. The demonstration of replica instruments allowed further ideas of similarity and differences to be explored by the group members. The cittern - 'like a guitar', together with the hurdy-gurdy, pig snout psaltery and a series of differing-sized recorders. Thus was the idea of the Tudor period having expert hand-craftsmen, equal with those of modern times, reinforced.'

Summary

'In a nutshell, the Education Team has the enviable ability to make Sulgrave 'come alive' with a delivery strategy that clearly and accurately reinforces the idea that real people with real-life challenges once lived in the manor house.

The whole session was a tour de force in that single session, owing to concise planning and time-keeping, the visiting group members left with a factual outline of the entirety of the Tudors time on the English throne. Truly admirable.

The final farewell, "God be with you" will remain with the group members as it was explained that the four words had, over time, become "Goodbye".'