



School Project Case Study: Oxfordshire

“The students really enjoyed experiencing the ‘real thing’, touching the flint and stone of the church, making bricks, hearing the bustle and sound of the market, and capturing the excitement of a train and boat journey something which none of them had ever experienced before.”

Valerie Wardlaw & Jill Hutchinson – River and Rowing Museum, Henley.

- Education and Skills Manager – Aretha George, England’s Past for Everyone.
- Education Consultant – Jill Hutchinson, River and Rowing Museum, Henley.
- Historian and Research Advisor – Simon Townley, VCH Oxfordshire.
- Nicole Smith, Teacher, Mabel Prichard Special Educational Needs School, Oxford.

Overview

The Oxfordshire project was created in partnership with the River and Rowing Museum, Henley. The project examined the history of industry in Burford and Henley, and the effects of the river on industry and trade in the area. The educational material was created by Jill Hutchinson (River and Rowing Museum), based on research done by the VCH Oxfordshire team for two EPE paperbacks (*Burford: Buildings and People in a Cotswold Town* and *Henley-on-Thames: Town, Trade and River*). The project was developed to suit the needs of pupils with special educational needs (SEN), but would also engage mainstream Key Stage 1 – 2 pupils. The material was trialled among the Bronze class (Key Stage 3) of nine pupils at Mabel Prichard SEN School during the spring 2008 term. The project included a boat trip along the river, historic tour of Henley and Burford and a treasure trail to identify objects and buildings, as well as hands-on activities within the classroom. The pupils completed the project by giving a presentation to their parents/carers, teachers and fellow pupils, and also produced a talking book.

Project planning

The project went through a number of changes. Early discussions were held in 2005 with Sense of Place (Henley) and the Local Education Authority, however none of

these plans were further developed. Unsuccessful efforts were also made to identify an Education Consultant for the project, until the River and Rowing Museum stepped in. The idea of including a SEN primary school came from the museum, and Jill Hutchinson developed the School Project Planner in July 2007.

The school wanted to complete the project by the early part of the spring term; although this was before the VCH Oxfordshire team had finished their research on Henley, they still benefited from historian Simon Townley's input and the research done on Burford.

Project delivery

The project was successfully trialled and delivered on a cross-curricular basis. Good teamwork helped the project overcome any difficulties, and the school was able to devote plenty of time to the development of the activities and material. The project also helped Bronze class teacher, Nicole Smith, develop a new approach to teaching local history in the classroom.

The partnership with River and Rowing Museum proved to be constructive and mutually beneficial. The museum had already been working on projects designed for pupils with SEN, and this project helped them build on their experiences. Although the museum had a good knowledge of the Henley area, input from Simon Townley was necessary to support the Burford part of the project.

Although the SEN pupils included in the pilot scheme were Key Stage 3, the completed unit of work is suitable for Key Stage 1 – 2 mainstream pupils (ages 5 – 11). However, a project of this scale may prove more difficult to fully implement in a non-SEN school (often with more limited time, transport and budgets).

A series of project assessment and evaluation meetings were held after delivery, attended by all those involved.

Key recommendations for the future

- The Education Consultant to be brought onto the project very early on.
- The Research Advisor felt somewhat disengaged from the Oxfordshire school project and envisaged more research input. The Education and Skills Manger

and the Education Consultant must ensure that all those involved in the project are clearly aware of their role and requirements from the outset.

- Alongside this, clear guidelines must describe to everyone the project aims and what exactly is required for the educational material; examples of other successful projects could be used as templates.
- The project timetable to be drawn up in consultation with the schools involved, but not dictated by them.
- Clear lines of communication must be maintained, so that all project members are kept aware of schools trips, events and other developments before they happen.
- The schools projects to be timetabled to benefit from EPE/VCH research which has already been carried out.
- Logistics, such as geography and cost, to be factored into the planning and delivery of the project. The geographical scope of this project was a particular concern.
- The completion of the project was celebrated by an event at the school, enabling pupils to tell their parents about the project and promote the work of EPE. This could be replicated with other projects.

Project Expenses

Education Consultant fees	3,450.00
Teacher release fees	800.00
Photographer/video fees	500.00
School travel and expenses	600.00
Exhibition and evaluation	246.70
Workshop materials	1,510.27
Total	£7,106.97

This case study and evaluation is based on EPE documents, copies of correspondence and evaluation feedback. The scope of this evaluation reflects the evaluation material available.

© University of London.