

Case Study: Crestwood Park Primary School, Kingswinford, West Midlands

Background

Crestwood Park Primary School is a small school, with one class per year group. There are 213 pupils on roll, starting at Reception and going up to Year 6.

It was rated as Good by Ofsted when it was last inspected (November 2022).

As stated on their website, 'we encourage our children to be proud of their heritage and surroundings so that they leave Crestwood Park with a deep knowledge and understanding of the area they live in and have the confidence and inspiration to go into the world and flourish'.

This is the second year that the pupils have undertaken a large, term long local heritage study, with each Year Group investigating a different aspect of their local area.

With such a wealth of heritage and history in the local area, which has had a major national contribution, there is a desire for pupils to know and appreciate this.

"If you go on holiday and you say you are from the Black Country, you want to be able to say that with pride and to know what the Black Country is famous for. That's kind of what we were aiming at, because we have got such a rich history in our local area that it's a shame if children aren't aware of that" – History Lead

The role of Historic England

The Local Heritage Education Manager [LHEM] provided training on how to undertake a local heritage study, including how to use historic maps (which Historic England supplied).

Teachers have been shown how to use census data, the ancestry website, mapping software and how to get pupils to use these tools to investigate people who used to live in the local area. Different classes have looked at individuals from the past who lived on Bromley Lane, the road that the school is on and a location that they all know. This has provided a good way into studying and understanding the past.

"From that first CPD session we had, it became clear that there were some key themes for our area. Bromley Lane is the main road [outside the school]; with the knowledge the CPD gave us I went through the census to pinpoint local people who had lived on Bromley Lane so in Key Stage 2 they got a person that links to the area of industry they were studying [e.g. coal mines, canals, factories]. The children can compare their current life to what it would have been like then and

the amount of people in the house and that kind of thing from the census. So Martin [the LHEM] gave us a springboard, I suppose” – History Lead

“He [LHEM] showed us how to use Ancestry which is a bit of a minefield. He did a whole school training for that and went through it step by step. Without that I wouldn't know how to access any of it. It is pointing you in the right direction to collect the information because otherwise I'd be at it for hours” – Teacher

Each teacher then worked with the LHEM to discuss and develop their schemes of work. Teachers have used the LHEM as a resource and a sounding board to develop their ideas. Teachers mentioned feeling supported throughout which has given them confidence to use local heritage as a vehicle to teach not just History but to weave in other subjects including English, Art, Geography, IT and Music.

“[After the CPD training] he [LHEM] has also done two days with us, where he provided a clinic for teachers, they've gone in with their aspects and he's been able to say 'have you thought about looking at this', or 'this resource would be really useful for that'. He did that for every member of staff” - History Lead

Support from Heritage Schools has been invaluable to helping teachers have the confidence, knowledge and resources to develop a whole term's worth of bespoke and exciting lessons.

“I think that the thing with Heritage Schools is there's a constant support there. I don't think this study would be what it is and I don't think the staff would feel as confident teaching it without the input from Historic England, that has been a massive thing. I think, before people would have felt like they were fumbling around for bits, whereas now you're not. It's not like they do everything for you but they facilitate things for you, they can point you in the right direction but then it's still yours and you still have got ownership of it. It's just really helpful to know that there's somebody there with that support and to have that quality assurance of what you are doing and to say, you're on the right lines” – History Lead

“Having the access to those maps and how to use them, that's really helped. And I suppose it is his [LHEM] bank of knowledge, he was the one who told me about the Portland vase [story¹] and how to engage the children. Although you make up your own resources and plans, you get a lot of ideas from Martin [the LHEM] and I think that really helps because he's very knowledgeable about the local area” – Teacher

¹ <https://www.dudley.gov.uk/things-to-do/museums/red-house-glass-cone/red-house-history/>

Putting heritage at the centre of the curriculum

Pupils studied local heritage for a term, culminating in an intensive heritage week in the summer term, bringing all their work together.

The curriculum is designed so pupils' knowledge of their local heritage, along with the history skills they develop is built on each year as they progress through the school:

- Reception focus on the school and how school life has changed over time
- Year 1 study the local glass industry, the Red House Glass Cone building and its significance to the local area
- Year 2 look at farming that used to take place where the school now is
- Year 3 look at the local Brickworks during the Industrial Revolution through exploring the lives of some of the workers who lived on the same road the school is on
- Year 4 focus is on the local Ironworks and what life was like for those who worked there and lived on the same road the school is now on
- Year 5 study collieries and what it was like, especially for children, to work in the local coal mines
- Year 6 investigate the role canals and railways had in the local area.

Each class studies a different aspect of their local heritage, with the idea that by the time pupils have gone through the school they will have gained a considerable amount of local heritage knowledge, along with lots of historical and investigative skills.

"As they go through the school they're learning about different aspects of their local heritage each year. So it's providing each piece in the puzzle which comes together, so they've got that full, rounded picture by the time that they leave us"
- History Lead

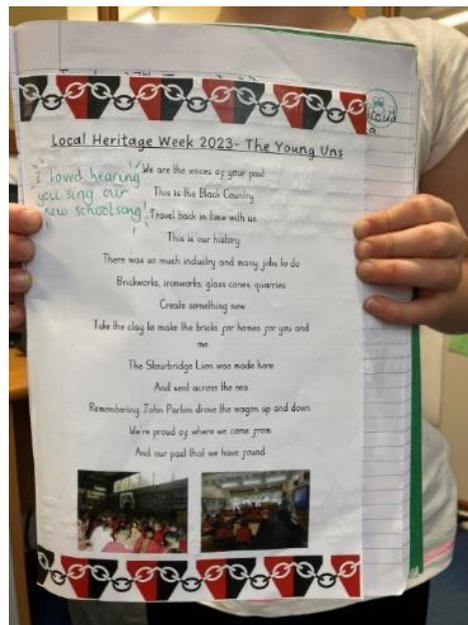
At the end of the term of study each class was involved in an intensive heritage week. The week started with a visit by 'The Young'uns', a folk duo who worked with the pupils to write a song about their local heritage and ended with an exhibition in the school hall of the local heritage work each class had been doing.

The connection with 'The Young'uns' only came about after the history lead at the school saw them perform with pupils at another local Heritage School. Being involved in the Heritage Schools programme provides exposure to what other schools are doing and ways to help bring heritage to life. The involvement of this musical duo provided an impactful and exciting start to the Heritage week.

The Heritage week started off with an assembly, where 'The Young'uns' wrote a quick song using ideas suggested by the pupils. Then they did an hour-long song writing workshop with Year 5 and then Year 6 which took ideas from what they had been

learning; there were verses about the local coal mines, canals and factories. At the end of the day this heritage song was performed in an assembly to all pupils and parents, with pupils singing along to the words they had helped create.

"It was really successful. There's been so many positive comments from staff who were overwhelmingly impressed with the way that the workshops were led and the way the pupils were able to really take ownership of it and bring out the children's knowledge of what they know from our local area and put it all together [into a song]" – History Lead



Lyrics of the song co-created with the Young'uns' (along with the Black Country flag)

Also at the start of the week, the LHEM visited the school to conduct a census workshop with parents and grandparents. At the end of the week parents were invited in to see the exhibition of what each class had been studying. The Heritage week provided an opportunity for all the school community to feel involved.

"A lot of our parents came here as children and we've got families where grandparents came here as children. So the connection to this area for most of our families is really strong. So we wanted to be able to pass that sense of belonging and that sense of pride in your local area to the wider school community" – History Lead

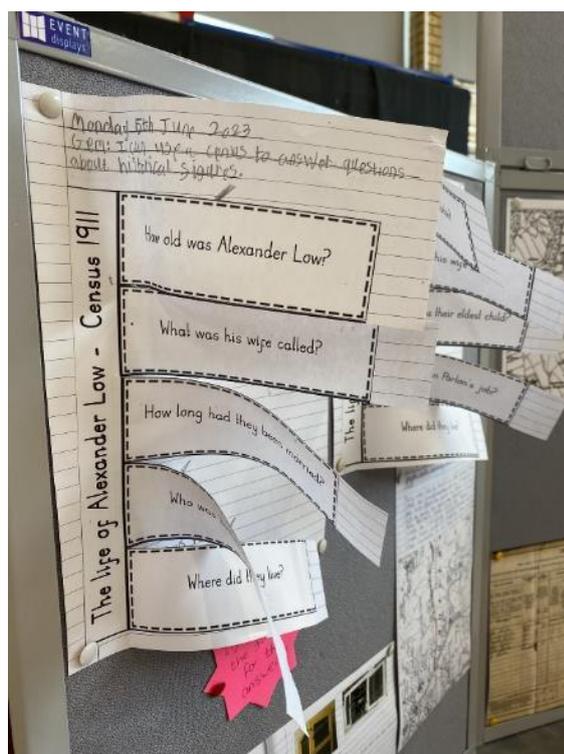
Learning about the heritage in their local area

What might often seem like a dry and limited topic (e.g. the local brick works or iron foundry) has provided a myriad of interesting areas to study and through using old photographs, maps, census records and identifying actual people who previously lived in the area, has helped generate lots of questions and an exploration of the past in an interesting, meaningful and engaging way.

"They're finding local things out which they really enjoy ... and then they retain it as well because they've got that basic knowledge what the area looks like that you're building on" – Teacher

"I think it [a local study] engaged them more, they have been more enthusiastic because of that, and then that helps them retain more and learn more, helps to develop their skills of course with the geography and the history. These are people who lived right here, just 100 years ago, I think they really enjoyed that" – Teacher

"The questions that they've asked have been really thought provoking" - Teacher



Local heritage studies generated lots of questions – across all Year Groups (above are from Reception and Year 2)

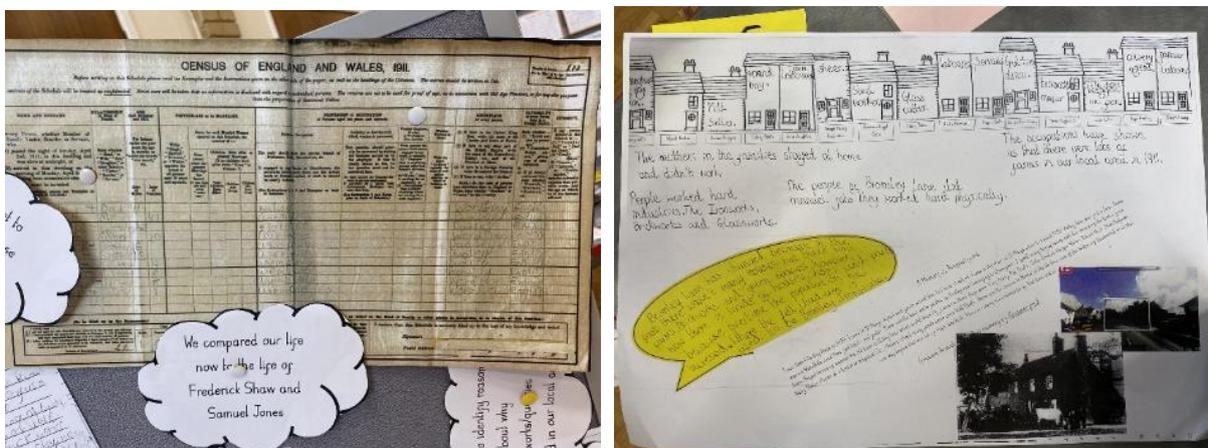
For teachers, using local heritage as a prism to study history is seen as being very relatable for their pupils and therefore makes the topic relevant, real and fascinating. Year groups from Year 2 upwards looked at the lives of actual people from information

they found in the census. The questions pupils have asked, and the hypothesis raised by them reflect this strong level of engagement.

"They were really engaged because they want to know the answers to their own questions. It gives them a purpose for what they're learning and writing" - Teacher

Using census data to investigate 'real' people has helped bring the past to life, providing a useful way in to getting pupils to ask questions, undertake investigations, explore what sort of people lived in the area, what jobs they did and to better understand what the past was like for 'ordinary' people. Without the CPD training from Heritage Schools it is very unlikely teachers would have got their pupils to use first-hand census data.

"They've [pupils] really enjoyed it, particularly looking at the two men who worked at the Brickworks. It brings it to life seeing the spot where their houses were, they could see there was a Brickworks round the corner, same with the quarries, they could see it on a map and see that it was there. It's tangible. We've used lots of different kinds of sources, we've used maps, we've done lots of internet research, we've had all the censuses up. We've learned a lot with the children to be honest" - Teacher



The census details for residents of Bromley Lane, where the school now is, were used by many Year Groups to explore the lives of local people from the past

Impacts of Heritage Schools on pupils

Their knowledge of the local area is built up as they go through the school, along with the historical skills they develop and their sense of pride in where they are from.

"They're building that picture of their local heritage, you can see as well their increasing confidence to talk about their local area and the pride with which they talk about it" – History Lead

The local heritage work has provided opportunities for pupils to develop map skills, learn how to do research, use evidence to support their arguments, along with developing their written and verbal presentation and communication skills.

"As history coordinator, I'm always keen that they're developing those disciplinary skills to actually work as a historian. I think, sometimes it's hard to find the opportunities for them so that they can conduct research and try to find the answers for themselves. Whereas using the census, that I think is true historical inquiry that they can take ownership of themselves" – History Lead

"We focused on writing a letter to one of the historical people we looked at in the census. It's in their English book ... thinking about the question we wanted to ask him" - Teacher

The local heritage studies have incorporated lots of different subjects including geography, English, ICT, art and helped developed lots of different skills including looking at evidence, asking questions, having discussions and debates.

From preparing and producing work for the whole school exhibition, staffing the table displays showing their work, talking to visitors including parents and governors, the project has provided opportunities for pupils to develop confidence and pride in their work. Teachers consider the quality of work produced to be very high.

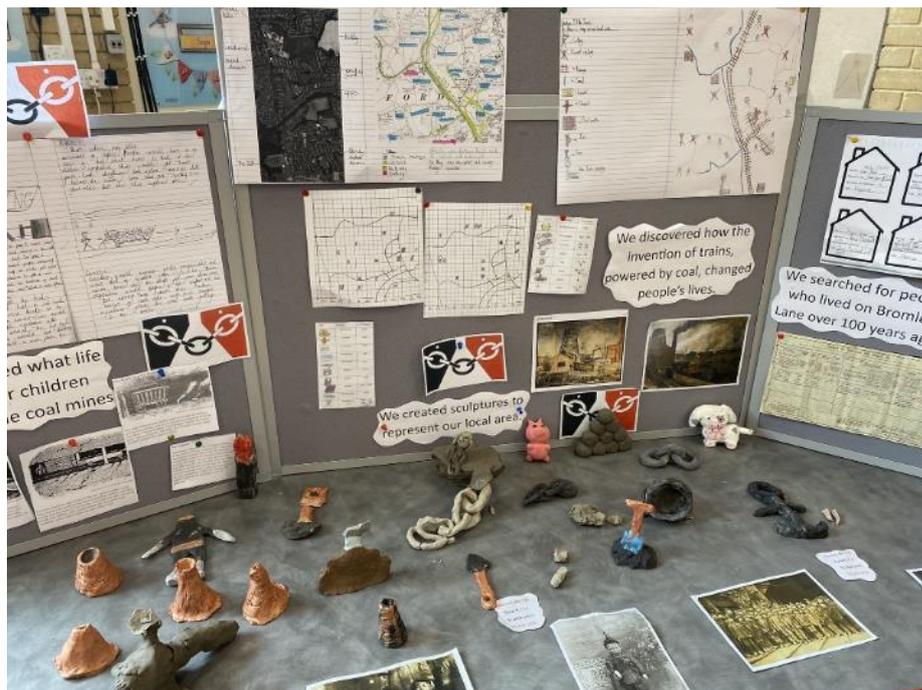
"Because the children enjoy it, they want to produce high quality bits of work ... they have really enjoyed it and I think that shows in the work that they've produced, and that's all you can want as a teacher" – Teacher

Through their studies and appreciating the areas importance in the Industrial Revolution, pupils have also developed knowledge and pride in coming from the Black Country and an appreciation of the general work ethic the area has.

"I think it gives them awareness of where they're from, and having pride about where they do come from" – Teacher

"There's a sense of identity in the Black Country, it's a working class place with the values of hard work and it's good to try it and instil that" – Teacher

"When we do local area history, they should be proud of their area, 100 years ago we were producing important products and transporting them around the world. I want them to have pride in their area and know that the Black Country was important. I think that they have taken that on board. I hope that they'll pass this information down to their families and be proud of where they've come from and what's been achieved here" - Teacher



Exhibition displays from Year 1, Year 3 and Year 5

The census workshop for parents and the pupils' exhibition which parents were invited to attend has provided opportunities for families to feel they are learning together, and for pupils to talk to parents about what they have learnt.

"I think it [local heritage] is nice because it prompts conversations at home, it's relatable, we look at people who lived on Bromley Lane [in the past], some of the

children live just a few doors down from them, some families have similar last names so I think they find it quite exciting. It just makes history relevant. They become the experts and tell the parents, did you know about this or that” - Teacher

Without LHEMs uncovering and passing on local heritage stories (like Glass Cone and the Portland vase), it is unlikely that teachers and therefore their pupils would hear such local tales. The LHEMs help save local stories which may otherwise be lost.

Summary

Doing a local heritage study and being involved with Heritage Schools has been enjoyable for teachers and pupils.

The CPD training, resources and assistance provided by Heritage Schools created the foundations for teachers to develop an exciting and engaging programme of study, which went far beyond what they would have designed and delivered without this external support.

It is clear how engaged teachers have become with undertaking a local heritage study, having now done this for two years. There has been more than enough information to provide interesting content for a term worth of investigations. All the teachers are already relishing doing a local heritage project again next year.