

Learning Sessions at The Higgins Bedford



Toys of the Past (KS1)

Toy of the Past is popular amongst KS1 groups as it introduces the idea of the past to children through toys. They discover children haven't always had access to the toys they play with today. In small groups, they play with a range of toys and experience first-hand the kind of toys children (specifically Victorian Period) would have played with. They will be supported to identify similarities and differences between the toys they play with

today and those played with then, paying particular attention to the materials the toys are made from. This session supports learning objectives in the KS1 curriculum relating to History, Science and English Speaking and Listening.

"The day was well organised and all the activities were perfect for the age of the children. The facilities were great. The Toy workshop was well staffed and was a great mixture of learning. Thank you!"

Archaeology Detectives (KS1 and KS2)

As 'Archaeology Detectives' children find out how we can learn about the past by what people have left behind. Some of this session will take place in our Collectors Gallery where they will look through trays of objects and start to try to identify what they might be, where they have come from and what it tells us. They also have a go at reconstructing items such as a small pot or tile (like a mini jigsaw of 4 or 5 parts) which is another way we can find out about the past. They also put found items in a



chronological order using clues they know about the objects. KS2 children could also do this session with additional or alternative activities, involving experimental archaeology approaches, mapping a dig and sketching finds. This session supports learning objectives in the KS1 curriculum relating to History, Science, Maths, English Speaking and Listening.

"I have never been to The Higgins Bedford before, it is extraordinary."



Pre-History (KS2)

Explore the Prehistory time period through hands on activities relating to the archaeology of the time, grind wheat to make flour, attempt weaving and the recreation of cave art. The group will also re-enact the burial of the Bronze Age Denham archer. We will talk through one of the methods used by archaeologists to date objects known as stratigraphy. We will look at the clues from the

burial and discuss what it tells us about person who has been buried but also about the Bronze Age more generally. This session supports learning objectives in the KS2 curriculum relating to History, Science, English Speaking and Listening.



Bronze Age Archer (KS2)

Drawing on the archaeological discovery of a buried Bronze Age archer at Great Denham, we explore the approaches taken by archaeologists to date items found in the ground. The group will begin in our Collectors Gallery looking at the reconstructed burial and then the group will re-enact it. We will talk through one of the methods used by archaeologists to date objects known as stratigraphy. We will look at the clues from the

burial and discuss what it tells us about person who has been buried but also about the Bronze Age more generally. This session supports learning objectives in the KS1 curriculum relating to History, Science and English Speaking and Listening.



Romans (KS2)

Our Roman Session details how the Romans invaded Britain, whilst challenging some misconceptions about the Roman soldiers and imagining what it was like for those already settled here. The children will have the opportunity to handle artefacts used by Roman people in ritual, games and daily life. They will compare models of a roman villa with an iron age roundhouse, consider the Roman soldier's diet and a selection of children will also get to try on costumes. This session supports learning objectives in the KS2 curriculum relating to History, English Speaking and Listening.

"Really interesting, lots of hands- on experiences for the children."



Anglo Saxons & Vikings (KS2)

Our session on Anglo Saxons and Vikings details how the two groups lived side by side, whilst challenging some misconceptions. We look at evidence left by the two groups in Bedford. The children will have the opportunity to handle artefacts and try to work out which belonged to Vikings and which belonged to Anglo Saxon people using clues they pick up during the session and drawing on their prior knowledge. They will also have a go at writing messages using runic writing. The session

ends with a fashion show where the children use what they have learnt to identify whether the people before them are Anglo Saxon or Viking. This session supports learning objectives in the KS2 curriculum relating to History, English Speaking and Listening.

"Nice session and very welcoming volunteers. Good range of activities offered. Enjoyed the fashion show at the end to show the people of Bedford."



Castle (KS1 & 2)

In this session children discover why the medieval fortress that once dominated the town was destroyed. We are introduced to characters from history such as, Faulkes de Breute and Henry III and understand their role in the castle's destruction. Through various hands-on activities from brass rubbing, writing with a quill, trying on medieval costumes, understanding what might have been eaten during medieval times, discovering the role of the blacksmith and trying to knock down our pretend castle, the children gain an insight into castle life. This session supports learning objectives in the KS1 and KS2 curriculum

relating to History, English Speaking and Listening.

"It was awesome, it was the best. I loved everything. My favourite was he dressing up part and knocking down the wall."

Victorians (KS1 & 2)

Making some reference to the Higgins House, in this session we explore what life was like in a Victorian home. We find out about the hard work undertaken by servants, we try to identify some original artefacts and establish who in the household they belonged to. We play with the toys enjoyed by children in the house and also discover what Victorian school might have been like. There is lots of opportunity to try on authentic costumes and hear a little about Victorian Bedford. This session supports learning objectives in the KS2 curriculum relating to History, English Speaking and Listening.



Bedford's Evacuees World War II (KS2)

Our WWII session focuses on what life was like for the children evacuated from cities to Bedford. The group will be able to handle objects from the time, dress up in period costume, try out the air raid siren and the gas attack rattle, create their own evacuee label and celebration bunting! This session supports learning objectives in the KS2 curriculum relating to History, English Speaking and Listening.



Work produced by Limetree Academy children in an art workshop led by artist and illustrator, Katie Allen

Artist Led Sessions (All ages)

The Higgins Bedford has good links with a range of excellent local artists and crafters and are keen to arrange bespoke workshops to meet the learning needs of your group. Specialist sessions could include printing, clay or lace-making amongst others. Sometimes it may be that you want to develop the practical approach of an artist you are studying in the classroom or perhaps you are interested in an artist from our collection whose work is on display in the galleries. Either way we can support you to develop a workshop that meets the needs of your group. Charges vary according to the workshop and provider.

For more information about school visits, learning sessions and charges for 2026/27, please email katie.freeman@bedford.gov.uk