

THE SPIKE



LEARNING PACK Key Stages 1 & 2

- Enjoy exciting interactive and hands-on learning experiences in an original historic building
- Discover what life was like for the poor in 19th and early 20th Century Britain
- Live the role of a homeless pauper arriving at the Guildford Spike
- Explore the issues of poverty, policy and human rights

A Brief History

The Spike, or the vagrant's and casual workers ward of the Guildford Workhouse, provides a rare insight into the treatment and care of the poor and homeless in Britain. Built in 1906, The Spike was a shelter for vagrants, tramps and the homeless until the 1960's.

Guildford Workhouse was built in 1838, housing the poor of the surrounding parishes and vagrants in the same building. By the 1870s most able-bodied men and women vagrants who were capable of work used the casual ward system, with less and less being housed in the workhouse. This meant that larger casual wards were required and the Guildford Spike is a fine example of one of the purpose built 'modern' casual wards that were then built. The vagrant's and casual ward was separated from the main workhouse in order to prevent the sometimes unruly casual visitors, from disturbing the residents.

Casual wards, like the Workhouse, were designed to discourage all but the most desperate. The philosophy was that they must be "worse than the conditions of the lowest farm labourer".

So, what could vagrants expect of their stay at the Guildford Spike?

After being stripped of their clothes and possessions, forced to take a bath - probably in the same water as a dozen or more before - and fed a meagre ration of bread and gruel, occupants were then locked and bolted in their cells for the night. With the wind whistling through the ventilation ducts and the sounds of the other inmates groaning, coughing and shouting, it was probably a very sleepless night. The following day they could look forward to a task of backbreaking monotonous labour in exchange for their bed and board. Often they didn't even get breakfast and were instead given a meal ticket or voucher that could only be spent at a designated cafe. If they were really lucky they might get to pick oakum, which involved pulling apart old rope fibres, to eventually be used to caulk ships. The Spike takes its name from the small tool that was used for this purpose. It was a boring task, but infinitely preferable to wood chopping, or worse still, stone breaking.

Since a vagrant could not leave until his task was finished, there was no option but to grin and bear it. Once released the vagrant had to shift for himself again. Since no vagrant could re-apply to the same casual ward within 30 days of the last stay, often the only option was to walk to the next one, perhaps



following a tramping trail or map. Some Wards are better than others but most are uncomfortable, cold and grim. It's a lonely, miserable existence, but for a vagrant in 1906, it's a way of life.....

Few workhouses remain, most having been demolished or turned into hospitals or residences. Even fewer casual wards survive and the Guildford Spike is one of only two in the country open to the public. It is also unique as it has the only stone-breaking grills known to have survived intact. Vagrants would have to break stones into small enough pieces to feed through these grills.

What you can expect during your visit

During your visit to The Spike the children will be asked to imagine that they are vagrants who are applying for a nights stay. Spike staff will take on the roles of the Tramp Major or Mistress, and other Workhouse staff, and will be dressed in period costume to help set the scene. Students and teachers are also encouraged to come in costume.

In order to immerse the children in the experience from the outset, they will be lined up along the wall by the door in Warren Road, in the style of vagrants waiting for admission (an original image of this is provided at the back of this pack). They will ring the bell and then be collected by the Tramp Major or Mistress, who will open the door and let them in. They will then be taken to the outdoor Waiting Room, where the Tramp Major or Mistress will introduce the children to the strict routine at the Spike and 'search' for any forbidden items.

The children will then be split into two pre-arranged groups.

Group 1 (Tramps) will be taken on the Spike tour, when they will learn about the daily routine and the people who stayed here. Children will have the opportunity to enjoy several themed activities or 'tasks of work' in small groups within the cells, and handle Spike related objects.

Group 2 (Vagrants) will be taken to the Education Studio, where they will explore the background to the Workhouse system and the construction of the Guildford Spike through a selection of workshop activities.



Each session will last approximately one and a half hours, followed by a short break, after which the groups will swap over, Group 1 going to the Education Studio and Group 2 taking the Spike tour.

Packed lunches may be eaten in the Education Studio or in fine weather outside in our picnic area.

Workshop options

A choice from the following activities will be offered in the Education Studio:

House Detectives

If weather permits, students will be given a map showing the site of the old workhouse and a map showing the current new estate. Students will be taken on a tour to try and discover original parts of the workhouse. This activity will enable them to understand the scale of the original workhouse site and encourage discussion around the changing face of a local area and the changing nature of society's attitude to the poor.

In inclement weather, plans of the workhouse site can be overlaid with plans of the new site.

Skills learnt: enquiry, using source material, observation, communication and discussion

Supports Key Stage 1 and 2, History and Geography

Capturing the Mood

Using sketchpads and pencils, capture the mood of the building on paper. Use the sights of the washerwoman and smells of Jeyes fluid or carbolic soap to influence your sketch;

Or....

Tramps wrote poetry and used graffiti to express themselves. Imagine you are a tramp and write a poem or short story about your experience in the Spike.

Skills learnt: creative thinking, literacy and creative writing

Supports Key Stage 1 and 2 Art and Design, and English



Role Play - Crime and Punishment

Students will be split into groups and asked to study source material, which details the case of workhouse children accused of stealing and brought before the Board of Guardians. Students take on the roles of inmates, witnesses and Board members and play out the scene. Costumes will be available to lend greater authenticity. This can lead to further discussion on crime and punishment and treatment of the poor.

Skills learnt: planning, listening and debating, presentation, using source material, role play
Supports Key Stage 1 and 2 History, Citizenship plus Key Stage 1 and 2 English Speaking and Listening

Homelessness and Separation (Key Stage 2 only)

Students will be split into groups and asked to study source material concerning the separation of workhouse children from their parents and how the different classes of inmates were treated within the workhouse. Students will compare their treatment with how society deals with homeless people today and design a poster to highlight the issue.

Skills learnt: Using source material, enquiry, communication and discussion and creative thinking
Supports Key Stage 2 History, Citizenship and Art and Design

Citizenship – Human rights discussion (Key Stage 2 only)

In groups, students will be given object cards with various ‘wants’ and ‘needs’ on them. These will include items such as, water, computers, mobile phones, and food. They will then compare these to the belongings and possessions the tramps might have had at the Spike.. The groups will then present their findings to the rest of the class, leading to a discussion on basic human needs and the rights of the individual.

Skills learnt: listening, communication and discussion, working with others, presentation
Supports Key stage 2 Citizenship

Creative activity

The children will make something that they can take away with them. Activities to choose from will be:

- Making a small rag rug using recycled materials. Children will be encouraged to discuss how the poor would have made their own rugs and clothing, and repaired and recycled materials in order to save money.
- Planting a small vegetable garden in a decorated container. Workhouse inmates grew their own vegetables and there will be discussion about the importance of fresh fruit and vegetables, and comparisons with contemporary diets.

Skills learnt: creative thinking, planning, practical application
Supports Key stage 1 and 2 Art and Science, and Key Stage 2 PSHE



Some suggested pre-visit activities

Learn how the following groups of people manage today:

- Those out of work
- Frail elderly people
- Sick or injured and unable to work
- Orphaned children
- The mentally ill
- The homeless

150 years ago when Victoria was Queen, many people in these categories went into specially built 'Workhouses', there was no National Insurance and no Welfare State. The homeless or those 'on the tramp', could only find one or two night's shelter in workhouse casual wards, such as Guildford's Spike, before having to move on.

- Read an extract about a Workhouse from Oliver Twist
- Watch all or part of the film, 'Oliver'
- Discuss what it must have been like for Oliver
- Tell the Dr. Barnardo's story

Some suggested post-visit activities

Write a story using the characters learned about at the Spike:



Sarah and her baby
Will the young boy
Jim the seasonal worker
Tom the soldier

Why did they end up at the Spike?
What will become of them?
How do they feel?

Or imagine that you are a vagrant. Write a story about your life and how you feel about staying at the Spike.

Write a letter to a relative explaining how you fell on hard times and ended up in the workhouse. Describe the conditions there. Ask for help.

You are a philanthropist and wish to bring about reforms to the system. Who will you write to? What will you write?

Educational Aims and Learning Objectives

Through a combination of costumed interpretation, hands-on activities and role play, we aim to develop knowledge and understanding of Victorian and Edwardian poverty in Britain, and of an area of local history.

By exploring key issues, such as the life of a poor Victorian child, attitudes towards the poor and human rights, we aim to develop empathy and understanding towards other people and communities.

Children will have the opportunity to develop thinking, communication and social skills through debates, decision-making and creative activities, which focus on different interpretations of history.

A visit to the Spike also provides excellent cross-curricular opportunities for learning, such as Citizenship, Geography and PSHE.

Curriculum Links



A visit to the Spike provides key curriculum links for Key Stages 1 & 2, for example:

History

Victorian Britain, Local History Study, Historical Interpretation and Enquiry

English

Speaking and listening, group discussion and interaction, creative writing, drama and role play, reading for information

Citizenship

Understanding a sense of social justice and moral responsibility; discussing and debating topical issues and problems; what new uses can we find for empty buildings.

Geography

Investigating the local area; fieldwork investigation outside the classroom

Visual Arts

A visit can provide inspiration for art work at all levels.

Performing Arts

Role play, improvisation, performance. Excellent as inspiration for a variety of teacher led projects at all levels.

Essential Information**How much does it cost?**

Sessions last approximately 2 hours and cost £5 (do we want to review this?) per child. Adults are free of charge. Payment for the visit should be brought on the day and will be collected at break-time. Please make cheques payable to The Charlotteville Jubilee Trust.

How many children can I bring?

Maximum number is 30.

How many adult helpers should I bring?

School groups are required to provide at least one adult per 8 students under the age of 12 and one adult per 10 students under the age of 18. CRB checked Spike volunteers will also be available to help deliver workshop activities and guided tours. Teachers are expected to be responsible for the behaviour of their school group whilst visiting The Spike.

What should we wear?

The Spike is an historic building, which is now over 100 years old. It was designed to discourage vagrancy and as such the building is cold and dark in places, as it would have been when first built. The building has not been completely modernised throughout in order to reflect how it would have been



when in use as a Casual's Ward and give children and visitors a sense of what a vagrant may have experienced.

Children and teachers are strongly encouraged to come in period costume, and to wear practical shoes. We suggest waistcoats, cravats and perhaps a cap for boys, who can wear their trousers tucked into their socks, and mobcaps, long skirts, shawls and aprons/pinafores for girls. As it can get quite cold inside the building in winter, we recommend wearing lots of layers in colder months. Some examples of period clothing are included in the supporting documents at the back of this pack.

What should they bring?

Children need bring nothing but their packed lunch, which we will confiscate on arrival as 'contraband' items in the Spike rules and keep in storage until break-time. All other materials will be provided.

How can I book?

Contact the Spike Office for further information or to book a visit.

Phone: 01483 569944

Email: learning@charlotteville.co.uk

Address: The Spike

Warren Road

Guildford

Surrey

GU1 3JR

Pre-booking is essential and a free preliminary visit is strongly recommended for your preparation and ours.

Where to find us



The Spike is part of St. Luke's Park in North East Guildford and can be accessed from Warren Road. If you are coming by mini-bus or coach, please let us know so that we can reserve a larger parking area.

On-site parking is also available for groups arriving by car. Please notify the Office how many spaces you will need at the time of booking so that we can reserve them for you.

The Spike is fully accessible to wheelchair users, and our car park contains several designated disabled spaces. Please notify us in advance if there are any members of your group with special needs or if you will need a disabled parking space.

Some areas may be difficult for visitors with visual impairment due to low-level lighting. Torches, magnifying sheets and large-print worksheets are available on request.

Printed instructions for our workshop activities are available to visitors with audio impairment and all staff and volunteers on site have received disability awareness training.

Combined visit

If you are coming some distance, you may wish to combine your visit with another local site. The following are all within 15 minutes of The Spike:

Guildford Museum - 01483 444750

Guildford Museum provides a well established educational program, with particular focus on the Victorian period. Key Stage 2 sessions run in a specially recreated Victorian classroom facility, where children dress in Victorian costume and follow a Victorian style school role play. A combined visit to Guildford Museum and The Spike would allow students to experience two very different aspects of this historical period and provoke discussion and comparison.

