

CASE STUDY 4

MUSEUM OF LONDON DOCKLANDS

Why take part?

Staff had run a similar Takeover Day at the London Wall site the previous year and had found the experience to be very beneficial. As well as an opportunity to use the other Museum of London site and work with a different school, staff wanted to build on the success of the event by adding in elements such as costume and the development of child characters.

Who took part?

Two classes of Year 5&6 pupils from a school the museum had worked with previously. The school were regular visitors and teachers, in particular the Head Teacher, were known to be very positive about partnership opportunities with heritage sites.

What did they do?

The children were in charge of welcoming visitors and interpreting the galleries for the day, acting, singing and dancing in character, telling stories and working as gallery hosts.

How did they spend their time on the day?

The build up to the event started some months before Takeover Day, with the pupils visiting the museum and regular meetings taking place at school. The museum's learning staff helped pupils research relevant time periods, develop their characters and stories and script their performances. The children also learnt about the role of visitor services, including how to welcome visitors, use radios and make announcements.

On Takeover Day the children worked in teams, stationed in different areas of the museum to interact with visitors en route round the galleries. Some children also filmed the performances, which were scheduled to take place at regular intervals during the day.

What happened next?

Evaluation of the children's experience showed that it had had a significant impact on their attitude towards museums (see Kids in Museum's Takeover Day 2012 report). After Takeover Day, the children were more positive about museums in general and expressed more enjoyment and ownership when talking about their museum visit. They also reported having more confidence and being proud of their achievements.

The positive feeling generated by Takeover Day permeated throughout the school and has strengthened their relationship with the museum. Teachers have a better understanding of the innovative ways in which the museum can be used for teaching and learning.

'I enjoyed it when a man had a can of drink and Guisy (Visitor Host) told me to tell him that drinks weren't allowed in the galleries and I did it but all the men round us started to laugh but he gave me the drink and said "you're doing a good job mate". That was probably the moment when I felt most important.'

