

ARTS AWARD Case Study I

Lakeland Museums Education Network (LMEN)



LMEN is a group of education providers from museums, galleries and libraries in South Lakeland. The museums provide cross-curricular education services. LMEN's Arts Award project involved members of the network, Kendal Archive Centre, Kendal Museum, the Quaker Tapestry Museum and the Museum of Lakeland Life and Industry (MOLLI).

WHY DO ARTS AWARD?

The network wanted to pilot Arts Award Discover in order to test how it could be done in a museum or gallery setting.

WHICH LEVEL AND WHY DID YOU CHOOSE IT?

Completing the Discover level suited the age of the students involved and focused on topics they were covering in the national curriculum.

WHO DID IT?

A local primary school was planning a whole-school project about the history of Kendal. Through the local library they got in touch with LMEN to ask for direction. LMEN grasped the opportunity to work with the school. The LMEN team ran a workshop with each year group in the school. The activities made connections between the Kendal Archive Centre and the museums by running visits to these sites and linking artefacts and records within the archives.

LMEN then recognised that plans for Year 3's learning about 'Museums and Significant Buildings' fitted with the requirements of Arts Award Discover. Working primarily with sixty Year 3 students LMEN created a programme to suit Arts Award and connect the kids with the cultural organisations.

WHAT DID THEY DO?

The students began by working with the Learning and Interpretation Officer at MOLLI to create a children's trail. After going to the museum and getting a feel of the family visitor experience they thought critically about what needed to be included.

At the Quaker Tapestry Museum, they had a workshop led by an artist about tapestry design and techniques. This session involved various activities which got them to think about the types of materials and colours they could use in their own designs as well as focusing on the stories which can be told through tapestry. To develop their understanding of the tapestry they used drama skills to play out scenes from the tapestries and were encouraged to develop their own ending to the narrative. They each designed and made their own piece of tapestry, inspired by objects from MOLLI.

On their return to the school the children shared their work with another class, talking about what they had found out. They also created a display for the Westmorland County Agricultural Show.

WHAT DID THEY LEARN?

At MOLLI the kids developed their historical interpretation and museum design skills. They thought about what objects, text and activities they could use so that the trail would relate to a family audience.

Through visiting the Quaker Tapestry Museum they learned about Quaker history and how the art form of tapestry can be used to explain history. They developed their own artistic skills by learning how to sew some of the embroidery stitches typically used in tapestry.

The kids found out about their local museums and cultural venues and learnt how to use them to explore different aspects of Kendal. This included topics like the wool trade, geology, rivers, the castle and the Kendal Yards.

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

The students and their parents were invited along to the museum for a launch of the family trail. A display was made to show the process they worked on and the kids took their parents around to show them the trail that they had designed.

During the project the Quaker Tapestry Museum learned how to deliver a new session for schools. A continuing partnership was built between the artist involved and the museum. Feedback showed that drama was the favourite bit of the day and now the museum embeds this into every school visit.

A good working relationship between the school and the cultural organisations has been firmly established, which will be used as a model when working with other schools. The project proved to the museums that local partnerships between them will have greater benefit and impact than if they work alone.

QUOTE FROM MUSEUM

Working with pupils at the school has not only provided Lakeland Arts with a new interpretation that has been produced by children but has also given us a fresh insight into our buildings and collections.

MUSEUM OF LAKELAND LIFE AND INDUSTRY

It was interesting to watch the children in action during their early investigations as they listened to the stories and discovered how to create the embroidery stitches. Our volunteers learned how much fun it was for the children to act out some of the stories within the panels – so drama is now a new skill for our team to share with other school groups!

QUAKER TAPESTRY MUSEUM

Contact the Arts Award helpdesk at
artsawardenquiries@trinitycollege.co.uk
020 7820 6178

Arts Award is run by Trinity College London in association with Arts Council England working with 10 Bridge organisations.

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Supported using public funding by
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