Learning at Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse
Was the Workhouse so Bad? programme
Key Stage 3

Was the Workhouse so Bad? programme

Explore Victorian attitudes to poverty, morality and social responsibility in this active historical enquiry. The day introduces your students to different sources of evidence and interpretations as they meet costumed characters and balance good and the bad aspects of the workhouse regime.

Students interact with three actors playing characters from the workhouse: the workhouse master, a male inmate and an unmarried mother or 'jacket woman'. Each character represents to them a different interpretation of the workhouse and more generally, a different attitude to poverty, morality and gender.

A fourth session focuses on primary evidence. Students look at the building for evidence of changes after the Poor Law Amendment Act, and use documentary sources to compare the experience of the poor and needy inside and outside the workhouse.

Aims and learning outcomes

KS3 History

- Supports the study of 'Britain as the first industrial nation – the impact on society'.
- Perfect complement to an in-depth local history study.
- Historical enquiry providing material for students to create relevant, structured and evidentially supported accounts.
- Introduces students to important sources of evidence: primary documents and architecture.
- Presents different interpretations of the past and helps students understand how they have been constructed.

Essential information

A day of activities led by museum staff; 10am to 2pm, with a break for lunch.
Maximum group size of 120 pupils.
£5.00 per pupil.

Bookings

Advance booking is essential. For further information or to make a booking, please contact our Bookings Administrator on 01362 860563 or gressenhall.museum@norfolk.gov.uk