

Heritage School Case Study

Our Place - Local Area Characterisation

Summary: Primary school children use maps and work with a planner and an architect to decide what is significant in their local area

Where: Frome Vale Academy, Whitehall Primary, St Barnabas C of E Primary. Victoria Park Primary, Summerhill Academy, Millpond Primary

Who: mixed age groups from year 2 to year 6 (age 6-11)

In January 2014, Historic England in partnership with Bristol City Council's City Design department, trained local teachers in the use of "Our Place" a toolkit to enable local communities assess the character of their neighbourhood to enable them to play a more active role in determining what happens in their neighbourhood in the future. Characterisation involves identifying any important historic places or buildings and defining what makes their area special. The session involved fieldwork with the teachers learning the mapping and annotating techniques used.

Four schools then worked directly with, a local planner and an architect. The children walked around their neighbourhood annotating maps identifying characteristics such as tree groups, roof lines, noise levels, views and green spaces and produced displays relating to the local area, past, present and future.

One school went on an architectural walk in central Bristol enabling them to discover how architectural styles have changed through time.

Intended outcomes:

- Children develop a sense of place
- Children understand and identify and local heritage assets
- Children understand and decide what makes their neighbourhood distinct
- Children participate in neighbourhood planning



What we did:

- Looked at maps of local area
- Walked around local area annotating maps
- Researched local area on Know Your Place
- Created models to illustrate how the area could be improved
- Held exhibitions and invited parents in



Challenges:

- Learning what a characterisation assessment is
- Learning the notation techniques
- Taking children on a walk around busy streets



Successes:

The “Our Place” project has demonstrated that the methodology can form a valuable part of school curricula. Our Place can be used as a part of a local studies project and can meet learning objectives for geography, history, science, numeracy and literacy. The Our Place project was presented to a receptive audience at the Institute of Historic Building Conservation Southwest conference in September 2013. Alison Camp, a Year 5 class teacher from St Barnabas Primary School talked about the value that the Our Place methodology has for young learners, not just for mapping skills, but also to encourage pupils to appreciate the value and distinctiveness of their neighbourhood.

The Our Place methodology is now being promoted to schools across Bristol.

Resources and web links:

- [Know Your Place](#) website
- [Our Place report](#)

Next steps/extension activities:

- Local children to become involved in identifying local heritage at risk
- Children to become involved in local listing process and nominating heritage assets for listing



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Funded by