



Kirkleatham Museum and the development of their takeover day

## Introduction

As part of Culture Bridge North East's (CBNE) Creative Classrooms Let's Play programme we visited Kirkleatham Museum, where we spoke to Liz Vine, Museum Outreach/Education Development Officer about how they created the museum takeover day, which involves children coming into a cultural setting and experiencing a selection of the job roles on offer in the cultural sector. It was important for us as an organisation to understand how the day has been developed and what impact this experience has had on the children who have taken part.



Liz Vine , Museum Outreach/  
Education Development Officer at  
Kirkleatham Museum





## Can you tell us a bit about Kirkleatham Museum and your role there?

Kirkleatham Museum is the local history museum for the borough of Redcar and Cleveland, with a treasure trove of artefacts and exhibitions set on three floors all housed within a magnificent 1710 Queen Anne building.

I have been working for the Museums Service for 26 years now. I am the Education Development Officer for the service, working with schools and families visiting the museum and inspiring them to take pride in their local heritage and history.

Kirkleatham is also the lead partner for Making a Mark – a partnership of Tees Valley museums funded by Department of Education through Arts Council England, to develop sustained relationships with schools and increase uptake of cultural services.



## The idea for creating the takeover day came out of a collaboration between the museum and Sue Greer from Coatham Primary. What made you and Sue decide to develop this programme together?

I made contact with Sue Greer through the local EYFS network group. Our museum partners were invited to be part of a discussion with EYFS leads around cultural capital, to see how we could support schools in developing both the students' and the teachers' cultural confidence. We were looking for a teacher 'buddy' to work with the museum to develop a new EYFS programme – which was something we had little or no experience with at the time. Then Sue volunteered to work with us and it was a good match for both the museum and the school.



## How did you take the initial idea for a takeover day and develop it into a fully immersive experience that meets the curriculum guidelines?

At Kirkleatham we decided to develop our Toddler Takeover programme – that we had previously offered for families – to make it into a more formal learning format, whilst maintaining the playful approach to learning. As this was about the museum – rather than a particular topic or exhibition – we knew it would be sustainable over time and would work across different groups and abilities. Working with Sue Greer we agreed that this would be a playful way to introduce the idea of museums and culture to this age group and help them to find

out about different roles and jobs in the museum. Together we also explored how to incorporate 'Talking for Writing' into the programme.

## How many schools or nurseries have taken part in this programme to date?

Taking into account the hiatus of the pandemic, we have had four schools or nurseries per term coming to take part in their own Museum Takeover day. Some of these are returning schools bringing a new year's cohort of children after they have had such successful trips in the past.



## What impact has the programme had on the children that have participated?

Feedback from teachers tells us that the children continue talking about the visit for weeks after. And that the activities do help to develop and build vocabulary. We also have anecdotal evidence that children who have been reluctant participants in school have joined in enthusiastically with the activities here at the museum. We know that children have been keen to revisit the museum outside of school with their families – which shows that we are achieving our aim of increasing cultural confidence.



## What are the benefits of working collaboratively with schools and nurseries?

The museum is able to engage with new audiences through these collaborative programmes. As many nurseries ask parents to accompany their children on these visits, we know that it is often the first time the adults have visited us too. After visiting with school, many parents felt confident to visit us again with the rest of their families. These collaborations also give us the opportunity to explore our collections and learning offers in new and innovative ways. Piloting new things with partnership schools allows for the option of failure...and to adapt and improve the programmes.

## How many children can attend a session and how much does this type of experience cost?

We can accommodate up to 40 EYFS children at a time for this programme, and it fits into either a morning or an afternoon visit. The cost is currently £80 for the half day.

## How do schools and nurseries go about organising a day like this with the museum?

Schools may get in touch with our staff here at Kirkleatham to plan a visit. We are keen for visiting groups to get the most out of the day, so are happy to discuss plans and arrangements with the teachers and nursery leaders. There are also other activities and resources in the museum and grounds that are great for EYFS children, so we will also discuss plans of how to make a full day programme. To find out more about planning your own visit email me on: [Liz.Vine@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk](mailto:Liz.Vine@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk)

