

Opportunities for Education in Letchworth Garden City



Garden City living comes into view

The town's schools and museums combine to offer pupils a unique insight into the past.

Pupils from nine Letchworth schools got a glimpse of what Edwardian life must have been like when they visited the town's two museums, in June.

Travelling back in time, they soon discovered that life without modern day conveniences such as game stations, TVs or washing machines would be very different indeed.

Arriving at the First Garden City Heritage Museum dressed in period costume, the children tried their hands at a number of fun activities including: making home furnishings such as rag rugs; cleaning clothes with a wash board; playing with period toys; and designing their own postcards.

Taking in an Edwardian Nature Trail, the children were guided on a short walk to the Letchworth Museum & Art Gallery.

Finally, the pupils discovered how the first cameras worked, posing for a classroom photograph, later printed out for them in sepia.

Targeting pupils at Key Stage 1 studying houses and homes, toys and summer holidays from the past, the week-long event was a great success.

"The children had a fantastic time," said Stonehill teacher, Nick Phillips. "The smiles and fascinated looks on their faces confirmed their enjoyment and interest."

Next year, the Heritage Museum will be staging a similar event for Key Stage 2 pupils. Interested schools are invited to contact Eleanor Sier on 01462 482710 for dates and details.

2,500 pupils, 14 schools, 45 events, 9 subject specialists...

It all adds up to a great success for Fearnhill's Maths and ICT Festival.

Staged over two days at venues across the Garden City, involving ten Primary and all four Secondary schools in a series of practical workshops, lectures and presentations, the fun-packed Festival focused on new ways to solving problems.

Central to its success was the arrival of experts from organisations such as University of Hertfordshire, Luton & Bedford Education Business Partnership, Cambridge University, Hertfordshire Setpoint, The Happy Puzzle Company, Liverpool University, Groundwork Trust and Hertfordshire Careers Service who presented both teachers and pupils with tough challenges and some innovative solutions.



Young artists' stunning debut

Art Centre exhibition delights friends and families.

In a ground-breaking partnership with the University of Hertfordshire, young artists from three LGC Secondary schools collaborated in a series of sound and light workshops.

The students, from The Highfield, Fearnhill and St Francis College, embraced new approaches and techniques, encouraging them to be more experimental in creating, developing and presenting their ideas.

The output was a stunning, interactive and dynamic exhibition staged in Letchworth Arts Centre's fabulous Main Gallery. This showed great promise and thrilled all who saw it, not least the families and friends of the young artists.



Collaborative habitats

The Highfield School and Link Primary schools share and develop science expertise.

Working closely together, Science teachers from four Link Primary schools and The Highfield School are leading an action plan to support the way the subject is being taught in all five schools.

The Primary-Secondary partnership has achieved a great deal in a relatively short space of time.

This has largely been due to the success of 'twilight toolbox sessions' where teachers have worked collaboratively to devise suitable learning strategies for their respective year groups.

This summer, the partnership has been delivering a project for 160 Year 6 students on wildlife habitats.

Literally getting to grips with live spiders, snakes and cockroaches, the pupils attended sessions at The Highfield. Returning to their own schools, they set to work investigating the mini beast population found in their school grounds.

Looking ahead, the partnership has ambitious plans to harvest new science clubs and a Young Science Ambassadors scheme.



Hands on workshops for schools

The Heritage Foundation's First Garden City Heritage Museum is offering a series of fun-packed, 15-minute workshops for Key Stages 1 & 2 including 'History Detectives', 'The Great Object Explorer' and 'I am the Town Planner.'

All workshops are tailored to meet the needs of visiting school groups with teachers' packs available for history, geography, and art & design. There are activities and resources for GCSE and 'A'-Level students too.

For further information, download the Museum's schools' leaflet at www.lgchf.com/heritage-museum

Three-year improvement scheme to culminate in Primary schools' INSET Day celebration.

'Artstart' reaches grand finale



It began as something of an experiment. How best to prepare pupils for the academic day to improve their concentration, behaviour and self-confidence?

Over 90 teachers, from participating schools, working with specialist consultancy, Insight Arts Foundation, received specialist training to enable them to deliver a series of targeted 15-minute sessions involving art, music or movement.

Three years on, over 2,000 pupils at 13 Letchworth Primary schools have benefited. What's more these activities are now enshrined at the start of each day at many schools.

Training sessions, led by Creative Arts Consultants, have also proved to be invaluable and have enabled teachers to

develop the creative curriculum in their schools, enabling them to applying arts-based techniques in many subject areas.

Success, in large part, has come from the teachers' willingness to experiment and take risks.

Having galvanised the teachers to develop the necessary skills and confidence to deliver 'Artstart', the involvement of Insight Arts Foundation and Creative Consultants is coming to an end.

Looking to the future, Primary teachers continue to pool their 'Artstart' expertise and share their experience. Their next gathering is an 'Artstart' INSET Day on 23 October 2009.

For further details contact Alastair Stewart at the Heritage Foundation on 01462 476037.

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