

**Governor Name:** Claire Hall

**Date of Visit:** 8/10/14

**Subject:** Key Stage One trip

**Subject Leader:** Mrs Hussey/Mrs Hargreaves

## Focus of Visit:

The Autumn Term 2014 topic for Reception and Key Stage 1 is Castles and Courts in The Stuart Period. To support the children's learning, all Reception and Key stage 1 children went on a school trip to Oxburgh Hall, Norfolk to spend the day learning about life in Stuart times and castles.



## Summary of Visit:

All children were divided into small groups of 3-4 children, all accompanied by a member of staff or parent helper. These groups were then put together to form three larger groups which rotated around the three activities whilst at Oxburgh. All the children and adults attending wore Stuart costumes. Several of the staff and other visitors at Oxburgh mentioned how good everybody looked. One guide said that she wished she had put on her period costume too.

There were three activities at Oxburgh Hall:

**Domestic Life** – This session was led by a guide from the National Trust who manage Oxburgh Hall. The children were able to handle lots of different artefacts from the Stuart period. They were encouraged to think about what materials they were made from and what they were for. The guide then picked out several artefacts to discuss in more detail. Our group really thought about how plastic has replaced many of the materials used for the objects. This session allowed the children to actually touch and see replica and real artefacts that they may have seen on a screen or in a book.



## Oxburgh Hall Trip

Towers and Turrets – This session was also led by a guide from the National Trust and really supported what the children have been learning about this term in school. The guide asked lots of questions which the children were able to answer from the work they have been doing. We started the session by looking at the moat, drawbridge and gatehouse and looking up to see the crenulations which we would see closer later on. We were able to look up and see a real murder hole that the children had seen pictures of and learnt about. The children were able to expand on what the guide was telling us, with particular detail given to the human poo that was flushed into the moat and thrown onto suspected intruders! We were shown some amazing needlework made by Mary Queen of Scots, one of the children in our group found a Unicorn on it, like their school house. In the Queen's bed chamber, the guide showed us a line of holes in the bottom of the bed frame. She explained that these were used to thread a rope through which held the mattress up. The maid pulled the ropes tight at night time to keep the mattress off the floor. Our guide explained how it was important to have the mattress off the floor and a canopy over the bed to stop the bugs from the ceiling and floor trying to share your bed. She told us that this was the origin of the bedtime rhyme "Sleep tight; don't let the bed bugs bite". We then all had the chance to climb down into the priest's hole. We tried to imagine what it would be like with the trap door shut and with no light. One of the children in my group wanted to know more about the letter seals that were on display and we asked the guide to tell us a little more. My group decided that they were far too big and heavy "in real life" and didn't look like the pictures they had of them. This was a good example of how a school trip really expands learning. Finally we climbed up the spiral staircase and out onto the roof. Here we were able to see the murder hole from the top and look around the crenulations. Some children also went into the towers and looked through the arrow slits. I listened to a group of children discussing how you could see for miles and that is the reason the castle was built where it was. Again, this is something they have learnt about in the classroom really coming alive for them.

Garden Walk – Our group had lunch, many of the children opting for the free school packed lunch provided as part of the free school meals for all key stage 1 children. The final session for our group was a self guided garden walk. Unfortunately we were short of time as we had had such a good time exploring the castle, but the other groups explored in more detail so part of this report is based on what others learnt. The children were able to learn that the people living in the house grew their own food in the gardens. One of the gardeners even pulled up some vegetables growing for the children to see. I was impressed at how many of the vegetables growing the children could recognise. We were able to see some of the fish in the moat surrounding Oxburgh Hall. We had learnt during the previous session that they ate the fish. We saw a beehive and I discussed with my group what they may have kept bees for. They remembered seeing some candles in the artefact session and linked the two together.



### Values observed:

Many of the school's values were in evidence during the day. I have picked a few out:

**Respect** – All the children were well behaved and listened to the guides. They asked relevant questions and listened to the answers carefully. The three guides that we had in our group commented on how well behaved they had been. As we were walking around the castle other visitors stood to one side for us and lots of the children said "thank you". Several of these visitors said to me what nice and polite children they were.

**Excitement** – The school was buzzing with excitement as the children arrived in their costumes for the day.

**Inspiration** – The trip enhanced the education of the children and really inspired them to think deeper and wider. This was apparent by the questions they asked.

**Achievement** – Most children and adults went into the priest's hole and had a go even if they were a little scared. They also climbed up onto the roof up a spiral staircase, and down again, many of the girls in long dresses.

### Other Comments:

All the children I spoke to stated that they had had a really good day and that they had enjoyed learning lots and also seeing things about the Stuarts and castles "in real life". Many of them said that their favourite part of the day was going into the priest's hole and going up onto the castle roof. The boys were very put out to learn that they would have had to wear dresses until they were about 8 years old, although the girls thought this very funny!

It was great to see how much the children had learnt at school and watch how this history really came alive for them during the trip, and how they were able to think even deeper about what they were learning about. The children, and adults, attending the trip will have many happy memories of the day.

I would like to thank all the teachers for their hard work in putting together and running the trip. Also to the parent helpers who gave up their time to help. Special thanks must also go to the PTA, who heavily subsidised the trip bringing the cost down considerably.