

---

## **Case Study: Snape Wood Primary School, Bulwell, Nottingham**

### ***Using the school site for a unique, bespoke and engaging local heritage project***

#### **Background**

Snape Wood Primary School serves the surrounding council estate. The school is located 4 miles from the city centre in the north of Nottingham.

It is a small school, with one class per year group. There are 155 pupils on roll, starting at Reception and going up to Year 6. The school serves a deprived catchment area; 63% of pupils are eligible for free school meals.

#### **The role of Heritage Schools**

The Local Heritage Education Manager [LHEM] had arranged CPD training for teachers from across different local schools, where they learnt how to use historical maps of the local area, timelines, census records, local houses, and other evidence to put together an engaging local historical enquiry. This started the school thinking in more detail how they could better utilise local heritage in their curriculum.

The History Lead at the school also attended the Heritage Schools symposium where other schools presented what they had done in their Heritage Schools projects. This provided a wealth of ideas and inspiration from other schools for things which could be adopted and adapted at their school.

*"It's okay doing it yourself and having that confidence to do it. It's another thing seeing somebody else's project and taking those ideas and sharing them. You know that sharing of ideas has been really, really key to this" – History Lead*



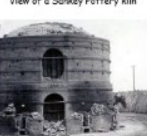





Although there is now a local history focus across all year groups in the school, this case study focusses on a single year group and how they have used the history of the site the school was built on to develop a term's worth of work.

#### **Year 3 - a very local history project**

On initial view, the school and surrounding housing estate, built in the 1980s, do little to reveal the history and stories which have taken place here. However, looking at the local maps centred on the school which Historic England provided revealed that a large pottery, owned by Richard Sankey, had occupied the site. The Sankey Pottery, founded in 1855, was the best known manufacturer of earthenware flower pots in the world, producing 60,000 handmade clay pots a day, which were distributed across the globe.

Sankey Pottery held three Royal Warrants and their terracotta garden pots are still highly sought after and collectable today.

*"I looked at the map and thought there's a pottery here. There was a huge factory which was the biggest manufacturer of plant pots for about 150 years. They got three Royal warrants. This stuff's all over the world, absolutely all over the world. You could buy in Canada and New Zealand, Australia, and no one knows it was here ... nobody knows about it" – History Lead*

<p>Key Vocabulary</p> <p>Victorians Census Industry Factory Pottery Terracotta Export Royal Warrant British Empire</p>	<p>Sankey terracotta pot</p>  <p>View of Sankey Pottery</p>  <p>View of a Sankey Pottery kiln</p> 	<p>Sankey Pottery was founded in the 1850s by Richard Sankey. For over 120 years it was the largest maker of plant pots in the entire world. 'Sankey Bulwell' pottery was transported around the world and is still famous today. Many of the pots have still survived and are now collected by people.</p>	
<p>Timeline of Sankey pottery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Founded in 1860s by Richard Sankey</li> <li>• Bankrupt in 1877</li> <li>• Death of Richard Sankey 1895</li> <li>• 1939 started producing plastic pottery</li> <li>• 1970s stopped producing clay pottery</li> <li>• 1980 Sankey's burnt down</li> <li>• 1981 factory was rebuilt at Blenheim</li> <li>• 2014 Sankey's was rebranded Fiskars</li> <li>• 2015 production was moved overseas</li> </ul>	 <p>Modern-day Snape Wood site</p>  <p>Historic Snape Wood Site</p>		

*Extracts from pupil's workbook – the school is where the pottery / factory was*

The evidence of the pottery is seen by the pupils every day at school.

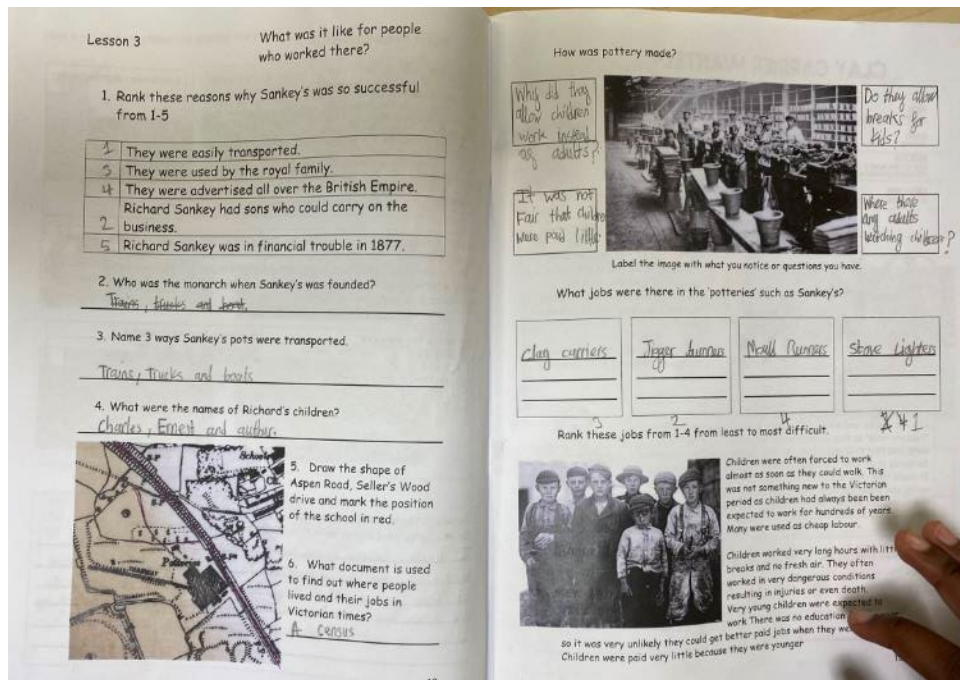
*"If you look down here [in the school grounds], this is all Sankey Pottery. So the kids are literally digging it [broken bits of terracotta pots] out of the ground, so from that we've taken a real journey about how do we develop our local history" – History Lead*

This connection has led to a local study, covering a half term of activity, to explore what was here before the school and to learn about the Sankey Pottery.

The starting point is to use the maps provided by Historic England to take the pupils from the present day, back in time, identifying change and continuity and to start asking questions about what was here before and why have things changed over time.

Their study involves timelines and chronology, interpretation, using evidence to support opinions, change over time and extended writing.

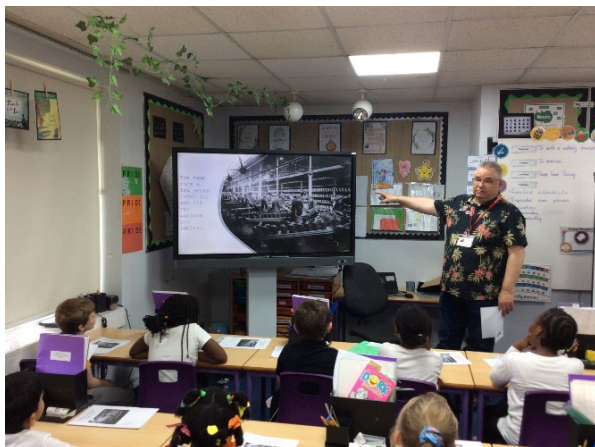
Looking through local newspaper clippings the History Lead has uncovered articles about children working (and dying via workplace accidents) in the pottery. These have been used for historical interpretation work the pupils undertake.



Year 3 pupil workbook - using historical evidence to answer questions

Whilst looking for resources the History Lead came across a local expert, Paul Turton, who used to work for Sankey Pottery. Not only did he come into the school to do a Q&A session with the pupils, he brought in various artefacts including original pots, old photographs and the royal warrant stamps used. The pupils had to use their knowledge to devise a number of questions to ask their expert visitor.

*"We planned beforehand questions that they might want to ask based on what we already knew, and then what else we wanted to find out" – teacher*



Pupils learning more about the pottery located on their school grounds from a local expert who brought in lots of evidence and artefacts

---

The local history study has incorporated other subjects, such as English & PSHE – including persuasive writing using child labour in the Sankey Pottery back in Victorian times as inspiration to write a letter to their MP back then to change the law - and art – with pupils making their own clay plant pots on potters wheels with instruction from a local potter. The school is also looking to undertake its own archaeological dig in the school grounds (originally this was to be in conjunction with the University of Nottingham which may happen in subsequent years but for this year times and diary commitments mean the school will be doing a dig themselves).

*“I'd say have a look at also adding a practical element because I think it's a really good way for children to learn and be excited and curious” – teacher*

Along with providing new opportunities such as working with a potter and undertaking their own archaeological dig, both being ideas which have spun out of developing this local study, the school is also looking in the future to potentially offer pottery lessons for parents, as an opportunity to bring them into school, become part of this heritage project themselves and engage more with their children's learning.

### **Impacts of Heritage Schools on teachers and pupils**

The Heritage Schools programme has had a significant impact on the school.

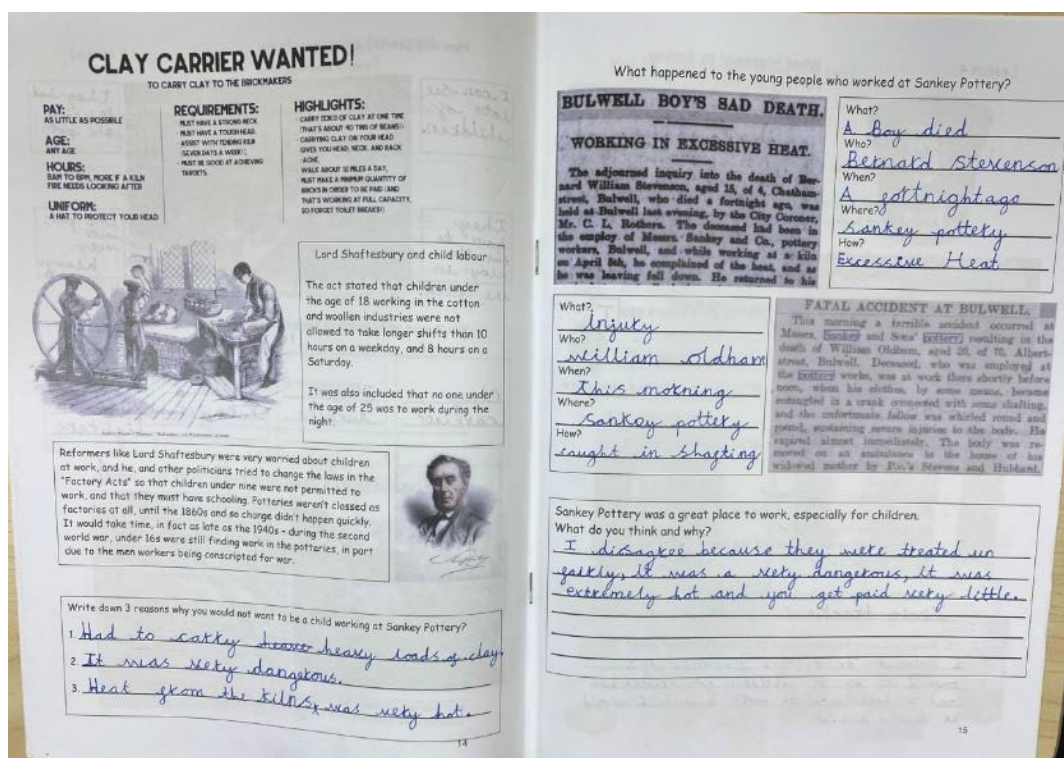
*“If I hadn't had gone on that training with Ismail [LHEM from Historic England], this unit wouldn't have happened because nobody knows it was here. It's a direct result from that training that we have managed to go on and develop this” – History Lead*

The CPD training from Heritage Schools has transformed the school's understanding and approach to teaching local history. Before being involved with Heritage Schools, the school's history curriculum was quite generic, but the training and resources provided by Heritage Schools has allowed the school to dig much deeper into the history of the local area, using maps, census records, and other primary sources.

*“When I say transformed, I mean it has really transformed how we teach history. We wouldn't be using census documents, we wouldn't be using the historic maps and certainly, you know that inspiration to use those stories and connections probably wouldn't have happened without it” – History Lead*

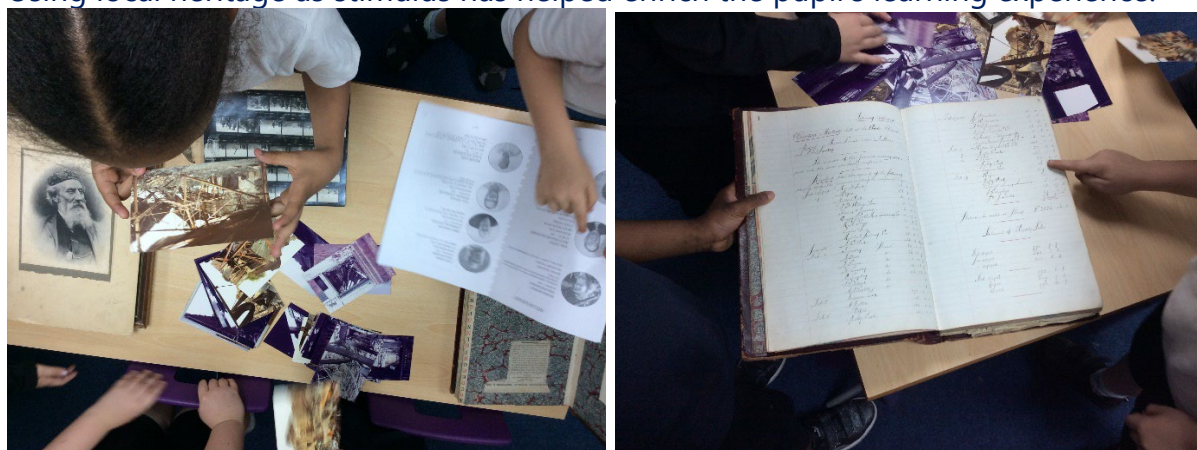
Heritage Schools has provided the school with valuable connections to heritage experts and resources, such as Historic England's Local Heritage Education Manager, that in turn has helped the school develop more engaging, relevant and impactful history lessons. The school has been able to bring in guest speakers and use primary sources that they may not have had access to otherwise.

Showing teachers how to use different resources, such as maps, images of the local area and census records has given them the skills, knowledge and confidence to use these in the classroom with their pupils. The History Lead has uncovered newspaper articles which are used in the classroom, reporting the death of children as young as 6 who were working in the factory, which is used as evidence by pupils to write letters to support changes in legislation.



Year 3 pupil workbook – using newspaper accounts as evidence

Using local heritage as stimulus has helped enrich the pupil's learning experience.



Pupil's using primary evidence to answer investigation questions

"They're all really engaged because they can relate to it, we're talking about their local area. They all have lots of questions. They've all contributed to discussions,

*even some of the children that don't necessarily enjoy history as much as other subjects, I say they all really enjoyed this topic" – teacher*

*"It is really interesting to learn about the past and what was here before in the local area" – pupil*

*"Narrative is king. If you can bring a story to it, they are far more likely to remember it than if you are just giving a whole list of facts" – History Lead*

The pupils have applied the knowledge they have learnt to practice skills such as historical interpretation, group discussions and writing for a purpose. The level of recall due to the pupils' engagement and their quality of writing are both perceived to have been higher when doing local heritage rather than more general history lessons.

Learning about the history on their doorstep, has helped pupils know more about and therefore connect more deeply with the history within their community, in ways they were not doing before the assistance, guidance and encouragement provided by Heritage Schools. The school is planning to erect an information board in the school playground with old images of what the site looked like when the Sankey factory was there, before the school was built.

*"I think it's probably more meaningful, and something they're probably more likely to remember, given the local context you can tie it into ... it's less abstract and a bit more real" – History Lead*

*"As a school, we're just trying to promote children to be curious and aware of their local area, have more of an understanding of where they come from" - teacher*

How successful was Sankey Pottery?

**SANKEY'S FAMOUS GARDEN POTS.**  
ASK your Gardener, Florist, or China Dealer for them. Used by the best Nurserymen and in the principal Noblemen's Gardens throughout the Kingdom. Plants thrive better in them than in others. Lightest, strongest, most porous, best shape and colour and do not turn green.  
**SANKEY & SON, Bulwell Potteries, Nottingham.**

THE LATE GEORGE FIFTH  
BY APPOINTMENT TO HIS MAJESTY THE KING  
THE LATE KING EDWARD SEVENTH  
BY APPOINTMENT TO HIS MAJESTY THE KING  
THE LATE KING GEORGE SIXTH  
BY APPOINTMENT TO HIS MAJESTY THE KING

**Richard Sankey & Son, Ltd.**  
Largest Manufacturers of  
Bulwell Pottery in the World.  
**THE POTTERIES,  
BULWELL,  
NOTTINGHAM.**

Printed and Published by the Proprietors, 1912

Sankey Pottery was advertised in newspapers throughout the country. People could send orders through the post and the pots were sent all over the world. They were so well-known that they achieved 3 royal warrants from the royal family. A royal warrant is given to recognise that the king or queen has regularly used goods or services. We know that Sankey Pottery was used by King George VI, King Edward VII and his wife, Queen Alexandra. Because Britain was part of the British Empire, goods could be transported around the world very easily on trains and ships.

9

By exploring the history and significance of places like having a world-famous pottery literally where they live, the school is able to help pupils appreciate their local area and instil a sense of pride. Learning about the Sankey pottery, which was and is famous, has been exported around the world, can still be seen in historic houses like the National Trust today and is still sought after can help pupils believe success is possible, and help raise their aspirations and ambitions.

---

*“Get the children to walk a little taller and be proud of their area. And that's something we're really, really after, that pride and knowledge of your local area, it does matter, there is heritage here and we can tap into that” – History Lead*

*“It's been really nice for them to see the impact because Sankey pottery was so successful and the pots were sold all around the world. That it's not just them here, there's links to everywhere else. I think that was a really nice part of it as well” - teacher*

Learning about the stories of the people who worked at Sankey Pottery and what happened to the products made, also has a resonance when trying to build community cohesion, identity, a sense of pride and belonging.

*“If the roots aren't strong from where people are coming in, you need to try and make them stronger where they are now. Let's really push so they can feel a sense of identity. The history of this site, people moved from all over the country when it was developing, and then the stuff here went all around the world; so that's something we can tap into” – History Lead*

## **Summary**

Successful Heritage Schools projects need the passion and enthusiasm from teachers, but once they are shown various tools, resources and ideas to use to bring history to life, they soon adapt and develop these to create a unique and exciting curriculum which their pupils positively respond to.

The training and help provided by Heritage Schools has enabled the school to delve much deeper into the history of their local area, using primary sources like maps, census records, and newspaper articles to uncover rich stories and details.

From discovering they are situated on the old Sankey pottery site, and with the help and assistance from Heritage Schools the school has turned this into an engaging project which goes beyond history to cover other areas such as citizenship, aspiration and local pride.

Overall, the Heritage Schools programme has transformed the school's history curriculum from a superficial overview to a much more in-depth, engaging, and meaningful exploration of local history that is having a positive impact on pupils' appreciation of, and pride, in their local area.