

Case study: The Hall Primary School, Glenfield, Leicester

Creating a community heritage book to use as a learning resource in school and to support community cohesion

Background

The Hall School is on the border between Leicester city and Leicestershire county. Around half the pupils come from the school's catchment area and around a quarter each from the wider city and county. The school has 420 pupils from Reception to Year 6. 12.3% of them are eligible for Pupil Premium, and 7.1% have English as an additional language. The school is very multi-cultural with pupils from different ethnic backgrounds whose families may have lived around Leicester for several generations, and others who have recently arrived.

The History Lead explained that Leicester is a very diverse city, but there is not much engagement between the different communities. The Hall School set up the Everyone's Welcome Club in 2024 to enable pupils to feel welcome at school regardless of their different backgrounds and abilities, to help combat any racial tensions, and promote integration. Its aim is to inspire the pupils to be interested, curious and embracing of difference and to view it as an opportunity to learn. Pupils from Years 3 to 6 run the club; they host a party for new pupils joining in Years 1 to 6 (i.e. those not joining in Reception, when most pupils start), have made an Everyone's Welcome display in the hall and talked about the club in a whole-school assembly.

The Hall School has been a Heritage School since 2017 and a Champion Heritage School since 2020. It has a team of 33 History Ambassadors in Year 6, who are History enthusiasts, taking part in various History projects with real-world impact in and beyond the school, including:

- Providing feedback on Heritage Schools digital learning resources
- Creating the Heritage Schools' digital Stone Age resources¹
- Video of three Ambassadors discussing the value of local heritage, on the Heritage Schools Vimeo channel²
- Hosting members of the Department for Education at the school, to explain why local heritage is so important for them and to showcase the school's Heritage Schools work
- Contributing to the website about local suffragette Alice Hawkins³

¹ <https://historicengland.org.uk/education/schools-resources/teaching-activities/?searchType=Case+Study&search=stone+age>

² <https://vimeo.com/heritateschools>

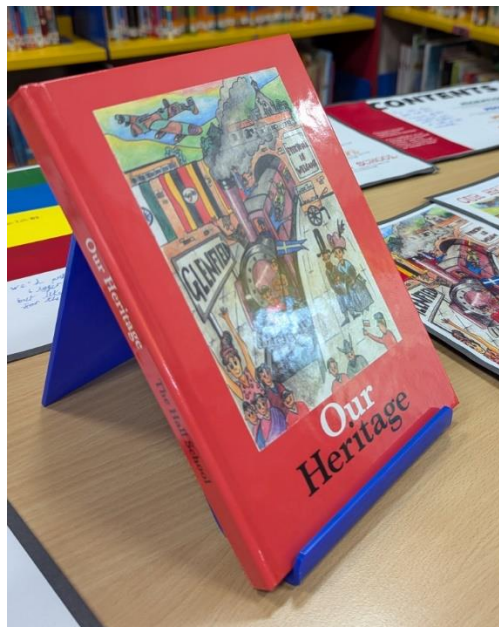
³ <https://www.alicehawkinssuffragette.co.uk/primary-schools>

- Photographing listed buildings and monuments around Glenfield, to add to Historic England's Missing Pieces Project⁴
- Writing a regular newsletter, interviewing pupils from all year groups in the school about their History interests.
- Suggesting content for a topic about Battles, now used in Year 6 at The Hall School
- Organising a school picnic to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day

Talking about the benefits of being a History Ambassador, one of them said:

"You get to use the knowledge that you've learned in the normal History lessons, and you can use it in more depth" – History Ambassador

"Our Heritage" project



"Our Heritage" hardback book

The "Our Heritage" project was planned because the Heritage Ambassadors wanted to promote the history of the locality and had studied migration in their History lessons, and the Everyone's Welcome Club wanted to ensure that everyone feels part of the school, so it was a natural next step for them to join forces to explore how Glenfield came to be, in terms of the people who live there. The History Ambassadors and the Everyone's Welcome Ambassadors (44 pupils in total, from Years 3 to 6) met together to decide what they wanted to find out about Glenfield. They sent a letter to the school families and to local history groups, asking them to share their stories about how they came to live in this area and how they celebrate their cultural heritage. These

⁴ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/missing-pieces/>

stories were made into a book "Our Heritage"⁵, professionally printed in hardback and as a digital version, with copies to be used in school and given to the contributors. The stories enable pupils and community members to appreciate how everyone is different but they still come together in one place. It helps them to learn about tolerance and respect, and find out about different cultures and traditions from elsewhere in the UK and around the world and which are now found in Leicester. The book was funded by a grant of £2,000 from Heritage Schools, which enabled a very high quality book to be produced as well as the digital version.

The letters were sent out in January 2025 and there was a good response from families and other members of the local community. The Ambassadors read all the stories, and each Ambassador annotated each response with their comments, using post-it notes. Some of these are reproduced on the pages of the book. One of the parents is a graphic designer and she worked with the children so that they could design the layout and choose the best colours and font sizes. They looked at books in the school library to decide what aspects of design they liked and disliked, and the graphic designer created the final layout according to their wishes. Some of the local history societies contributed historic photographs and postcards and some of the Ambassadors drew illustrations.

"It was great working with the graphic designer because we got to design things. We also got to make sure that every key bit of information is in the book" – History Ambassador

"We paid attention to each small detail so that everyone could have their opinion on it" – History Ambassador



Options for different layouts, colours, fonts, etc suggested by the graphic designer and annotated by the pupils to show which they preferred and why

⁵ <https://www.thehallprimary.com/our-heritage/>

The "Our Heritage" book was launched in July 2025, with a celebration at the school for all the contributors. One of them said:

"One of the highlights was the conduct of the pupils. They had clearly prepared with interesting and perceptive questions. They were rightly proud to have been part of this creative and ground-breaking project" – "Our Heritage" contributor

A copy of the book has been given to Glenfield Library so the local community can read it. The digital version was sent to all the parents and it is available on the school's website for an even wider reach. Some of the Ambassadors and the History Lead were interviewed about the project and broadcast on BBC Radio Leicester.

Impacts of "Our Heritage"



Some of the Ambassadors and a contributor at the "Our Heritage" launch

Reading all the contributions to the book has given the Ambassadors a better understanding of some of the origins of Glenfield's (and Leicester's) multi-cultural communities. "Our History" will be used in all year groups, so all the pupils in the school will gain from this knowledge and it will help to further improve cultural understanding. The History Lead has mapped all the topics in the book onto the History, Geography, RE and English curricula. For English, the book gives examples of different types of writing such as recipe instructions, non-chronological reports, recounts, biographies and autobiographies, and they can be used as guided reading resources.

The History Lead commented that the project has enabled the pupils to make the three-way connection between local history, people's cultural heritage and the present

day. It has increased their connection with and pride in Glenfield, and their sense of place:

"It's about making History relevant to the locality. It's very easy to think of History and Heritage as being something a long time ago and it happened to somebody else, but History and Heritage go hand in hand and Heritage can be current as well as in the past" – History Lead

"I have learned that there are many diverse people in Glenfield and how it's changed Glenfield and made it a better place to be" – History Ambassador

The project has brought the school community closer together too. For the book launch, two of the classroom assistants (from Gujarati and Punjabi backgrounds) made the recipes from the book and used the authentic ingredients and utensils. They were pleased that they had an opportunity to share and celebrate their heritage too.

For their topic on Migration, Year 6 learn about the Ugandan Asians who arrived in Leicester in 1972, having been expelled from Uganda. Several children at The Hall School have families who migrated from Uganda then. The story in "Our Heritage" gives all the pupils an insight into the experience of migration at that time, and at the book launch the Ambassadors were able to talk to the person who had submitted the story to find out about his experience at first hand.

My Great-Grandfather's Journey from Uganda to England

Krishiv Dhanak

During 1972, in Uganda, many Asians who had been living there for generations were expelled by then leader, Idi Amin. The Asian people, mainly of Indian descendants, were affluent and controlled the economy of Uganda, and Amin was not happy with this.

My great-grandfather, Girdharlal Lodhia, and his family were given ninety days to flee the country and were allowed to take only £50 with them. As my great-grandfather's family were not British nationals and their Ugandan nationality was revoked, they became refugees and went to one of the host countries (Holland) that accepted refugees.

Most of these did have British nationality, so they came to the UK to settle.

During the time of the European Economic Community, my granddad, Prakash Lodhia, later moved to the UK in the 80s to join other family members. My mum was born in London. Below is the newspaper cutting showing my great-granddad, granddad and my grand uncles who were frequently interviewed to show their progress and integration into the Dutch community. My granddad, who was only seventeen years old then, learned the Dutch language and studied to become an electrical engineer.

**“ Our children’s voice:
It’s really good to
see the pictures.**

This is a very resilient family.

“Given ninety days to flee the country...”



Trouw newspaper 06/01/1973

The headline says: "Ugandans are settling well in our country"

Algemeen dagblad, jrg. 33. 14/04/1979
The headline says: "Ugandans breathe sigh of relief"
My Granddad is standing on the right.

The Ambassadors learned a great deal about graphic design and the process of designing a book. As a result of this experience, one of the Ambassadors says that they would like to become a graphic designer.

The History Lead considered that the Ambassadors' confidence had increased greatly as a result of the project, because of the responsibility they were given in creating the design and content of the book. They were confident to talk to people at the launch whom they had not met before. As well as the contributors, other people from local history societies and extended family members from other parts of the country attended the launch and so more people became connected with the school. Some of these people may be able to come into school in the future to share their knowledge and experiences.

The success of "Our Heritage" has encouraged the school to look at other ways in which they can engage with the local community, not necessarily through History but possibly through another type of project. The aim would be to find people with relevant skills which they would be willing to share with the pupils. This would give the pupils new skills, knowledge and experiences, and would help to increase their cultural capital.

As The Hall School has been a Heritage School since 2017, heritage is now well-embedded throughout the curriculum and the year groups. As the teachers have become increasingly confident and skilled in using local heritage. "Our Heritage" is a continuation of the school's previous local history work, inspired and encouraged by Heritage Schools involvement, and is another example of how local history studies can show a wider national or international story in a way that is more relatable and comprehensible to pupils.

Summary

"I would say to any other school which is thinking of doing this, it's so worth the effort. We were very fortunate because we had funding [from Heritage Schools], but if we had not, we would have done the fundraising ourselves from the PTA. Even if you can't get funding to get a lovely product like this book, you could still do a digital version" – History Lead

"Our Heritage" has been very successful to enable pupils from across different year groups to work with a graphic designer to produce a very high quality book which will be used in school to teach History, Geography, RE and English.

They had all enjoyed working on the project, learned new skills, and it has increased their pride in Glenfield. Inviting the local community to contribute their stories has strengthened community cohesion and reading the book will enable children and

adults to gain a better understanding of the diversity of Glenfield and how that diversity has come about.

More links have been made with local people who may be able to support The Hall School in the future through sharing their knowledge of local heritage, and other skills which may be of benefit to the pupils.

As the History Lead says, this project is an exemplar which other schools could follow and even if they did not have the resources to publish a book, they could make a digital version instead which could be used in the classroom and shared with parents and the wider community.