The Workhouse Learning visits

Key Stage 3: Britain 1745 – 1901

For further information, prices and availability please call the Learning Team on 01636 817262 or email jane.tappin@nationaltrust.org.uk

The Workhouse, Upton Road, Southwell, Notts, NG25 0PT
National Trust. Registered Charity No. 205846
As Britain industrialised there were profound changes throughout society. Conditions were particularly difficult for the poor and Southwell Workhouse shows how the State attempted to deal with these problems.

The Southwell Workhouse was built in 1824 and became a model for the Poor Law Commissioners as they developed the New Poor Law of 1834.

Discover how the poor were treated in Victorian times and what life was like in the workhouse with our Key Stage 3 guided tour and afternoon workshops.

What was the attitude of the State to the growing numbers of poor in Victorian times and how was the workhouse system designed to combat this?

What did the poor think about the system and what were conditions like inside workhouses?
Your Visit

The morning tour runs from 10:00am to 12:30pm, though timings can be flexible. Lunch can be taken in our stable block, or on the field, in good weather. We offer a choice of afternoon workshops that run from 1:00pm to 2:30pm.

Key Stage 3 Morning tour
To The Workhouse!

On arrival, students are introduced to the workhouse system and Victorian attitudes to the poor by our short video. They then explore the building with our tour-guides, with plenty of opportunity for questions.

During the course of the morning they will meet at least one role-player who will tell their own story of life in the workhouse, allowing the students to empathise with the inmate and to understand the effect of the system on individuals. We ask that this aspect of the tour should come as a complete surprise to the students.

Find out about everyday workhouse life, diet and punishment, how segregation was enforced and how the building was governed.

“Southwell Workhouse provides an experience that will live long in the memory of visiting learners of all ages. Staff and volunteers work tirelessly to provide an excellently managed and delivered site specific immersive role-play experience, which serves to promote an enjoyment of learning that will in turn embed learning. The Victorian workhouse comes alive at Southwell in a way that is arguably more authentic than Dickens’ widely accepted interpretation.”
Afternoon workshops

Pick one of the following afternoon workshops to complete your visit. These activities are available as 1–1 ½ hour sessions to follow the morning tour.

**Inquiry board**

A source-based workshop

In groups, students must decide whether the statement ‘Paupers were treated badly in the Southwell Workhouse in the 19th century’ is fair and accurate. After developing questions around a variety of topics including segregation, punishment, food, health and education, pupils hot-seat members of Workhouse staff.

Using information given during the morning tour, the hot-seating answers and extracts from workhouse documents (including the punishment book, dietary and Poor Law Inspector’s Reports), pupils draw conclusions about the treatment of paupers in the Southwell Union Workhouse.

**In or out?**

A discussion about the pros and cons of the workhouse system

Using their morning’s experiences and their existing knowledge of the workhouse system, the Victorian alternatives and how workhouses laid the foundation for the modern Welfare State, students discuss the positives and negatives of the workhouse. What were the benefits for paupers? How did the ratepayers benefit? What alternatives were there?

The discussion concludes with a class vote about whether workhouses were a good system of relief for the poor. This workshop is ideal for students with knowledge of life for the Victorian poor outside the workhouse.

**Rights, needs, wants?**

A discussion about human rights now and in the past.

Students are the government of a country for the afternoon! In small groups, students must decide which of 24 necessities, human rights and luxuries they can provide for their people, with the money they have. As the country’s resources dwindle, so students must reduce the number of services they supply. Will each government choose the same rights?

Students move on to analyse which human rights the workhouse granted the Victorian poor and compare this with life on the outside.
Plan your visit

Booking
Call the Learning Team on 01636 817262 to discuss your visit. Please let us know:
- The date you would like to visit - it can help at busy times if you have a few options
- What time you will arrive and when you have to leave
- How many students and adults - National Trust suggests a ratio of 1:8
- The year groups of the students and any specific access or SEN requirements
- Your choice of afternoon workshop
- Whether or not you wish to include a visit to the shop at lunch time

Confirmation
- Once you have confirmed your visit, you will receive a confirmation letter along with insurance forms. Please read carefully, complete and return to the Learning Team.
- We will send you a ‘Before You Visit’ pack with essential information and guidance for your visit.

Preliminary visit
All teachers can make a free preliminary visit to the site.
Please contact the Learning Team to book.

Prepare
Make sure you read the ‘Before You Visit’ pack and that all accompanying adults know what will be happening on the day.

Please note that the autumn term is especially popular.
To avoid disappointment, please book well in advance.

NTWorkhouse

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/theworkhouse