

LEARNING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM HERITAGE SECTOR PARTNERSHIP

Case Study

ARCHIVE

Getting the most from this case study.....

- When you read this case study, you will find it useful to have a copy of the Quality Indicators or the Quality Badge SEF to hand.
- You will see that the case study has sections of text highlighted in bold. This text indicates an aspect of practice at this organisation that can be directly linked to a Quality Indicator.
- At the end of a section of bold text or at the end of the sentence containing that text, you will see a reference number in brackets. To find out what that number means, go to the last page of the case study, which contains a table listing all of these reference numbers. Next to each reference number there is a Quality Indicator number/s.
- Look up the Quality Indicator number/s on your SEF and to find out how a specific aspect of practice at this organisation might help them to get the Quality Badge.

Introduction

Anytown Archive is a small local authority service based in a Victorian building in the town centre. It employs one full-time manager and a part-time assistant. A small group of volunteers assist with cataloguing and storage work two afternoons a week. There is a searchroom for visitors who book space on a first come first served basis. The public areas of the building are on the ground floor with access for visitors with mobility problems. Toilets are available. The archive does not have a car park but is close to public transport and town centre car parks.

Anytown High School is a large mixed comprehensive school on the outskirts of the town. The school's history teacher is bringing a group of year 12 History students for a workshop on Historical Skills near the beginning of their A-level course. There are 15 students of mixed abilities aged between 16 and 17.

Description of Practice

I am the records manager at Anytown Archive. My role involves managing, developing and providing access to the collection. I manage a part-time assistant and six volunteers. I have no formal training in education.

Over the past two years we have started to offer sessions for school groups. We initially applied for a small amount of funding from MLA to develop an archive pack for history teachers. One of our long

term volunteers, Sue, is a **former teacher (1)**. She developed a relationship with the history department at our local secondary school and worked with staff there to devise a workshop for GCSE and A-level History students. We now offer that workshop on a limited basis to local schools. We provide basic **information** about the schools workshops on our **website** which describes **what we offer, the age groups and number of students we can cater for**. It gives our **phone number and e-mail address** and lists our **opening times, facilities and how to get here by public transport (2)**. The same information is reproduced in our information leaflet, which is also available in **large print (3)**. We have a **minicom number** which goes through to the council's central enquiry office **(4)**. We do not charge for school visits, though we do charge for the teachers' pack and for providing copies of other documents. The **prices are clearly stated** on the website and information leaflet **(5)**. The leaflet and website are **reviewed annually** to keep them **up to date (6)**. Anytown High School's history teacher rang last term to book a visit for his Year 12 History group. School bookings depend on the searchroom being free and on the right person being available to lead the session. This is usually Sue because of her **teaching experience**, though I or my assistant sometimes deliver the session from a professional **archivist's perspective (7)**. We have limited staff and volunteer time and can only accommodate 20 students, so we don't receive many school visits. However, as **local teachers get to know us** they are starting to bring groups more regularly **(8)**.

We agreed that this group would visit on a Thursday morning, when we had no volunteers or visitors using the searchroom. I **booked the room out** for two hours to ensure that the students would be **secure (9)**. I also confirmed that Sue would be **available to lead the session (10)**.

I emailed the teacher three documents: a workshop outline, a copy of our school visit guidelines and a booking form. The **workshop outline** explains the **learning objectives for the session and how the students will achieve them**, for example, they practice historical research skills by analysing original documents **(11)**. We also suggest a few simple activities that teachers could do with students to **prepare for the visit**, such as researching what an archive is and what it does **(12)**.

The **booking form** captures important information we need about the visit: time and date, numbers of staff and students; their age, year group and **any access needs (13)**. It also asks teachers to confirm they **are happy with the workshop outline and learning objectives we have described (14)**. The booking form confirms our agreement with the school in writing and reduces the chance of confusion over what was agreed.

In booking a workshop teachers are required to accept our **visit guidelines**. These include our standard searchroom rules and a behavioural code for students. The guidelines also clarify **roles and responsibilities**: for example, the archive provides a safe learning environment, but we expect teachers to be responsible for students' behaviour **(15)**. I emailed the teacher our standard **risk assessment**, which covers the venue and activity, for him to use in writing his own risk assessment for the visit **(16)**.

On the day of the visit, Sue arranged the searchroom while I got out the archive materials the group would be using. We use the **archive searchroom** as it is the only room **large enough** to accommodate a group and gives students an **authentic experience** of a working archive **(17)**. When the group arrived we ask the teacher to **sign them in** and everyone to **deposit coats and bags** in our office area where they would be safe and out of the way **(18)**. We showed them into the searchroom where we had set out five desks, each with three chairs, for the students to work in small groups. Sue began with a 10-minute **question and answer introduction (19)**. This covered what an archive is, a demonstration of when and how to handle the materials, and our searchroom rules (such as why we don't allow pens, food and drink etc). She also included a **brief description of fire and emergency procedures (20)**.

Sue then introduced the group work. We put a selection of archive materials on each of the five desks along with a laminated sheet of **questions** to help the students analyse the documents. Each table also had an **envelope of clues** that students could choose to open if they got stuck **(21)**. Students **worked in their groups**, with Sue and the teacher moving around to help and supervise. Every 10 minutes the groups moved to the next table. Students did not write anything, because the main aim is to **examine and discuss the sources (22)**. We used a range of source materials to represent our collection and help students understand the breadth of evidence that historians can use. The teacher had asked if they could see material relating to the Suffragettes, so on one table I had got out some documents about a local Suffragette group. We can't always do this but where possible we **try to meet teachers' requests (23)**. I make regular **checks on the condition** of documents that we use for school groups **(24)**.

During the session Sue **spoke to the teacher regularly to check that he was happy** with how things were going **(25)**. When each group had seen each set of documents, she brought the class together in a **group discussion (26)** to draw conclusions and get their **feedback** on the session **(27)**. While Sue was doing this, the teacher completed a short **evaluation form (28)**. It has standard questions that help us find out whether the teacher's expectations and original learning objectives had been met. Before the group left, the teacher bought one of our teachers' packs which contains facsimile documents and **follow-up activities** to do in school **(29)**. The visit had lasted an hour and a half. Sue and I **discussed the session** after the group had left. She had noticed that the students found one set of documents harder to understand than the others. This tallied with feedback from the teacher **(30)**. We agreed to **use different documents in future (31)**.

I talk informally to volunteers about their work, but also hold more **formal reviews every 3 – 4 months** to ensure they are happy and address any problems. During our reviews Sue and I discuss overall feedback from teachers and ideas on how we can improve the session in future, including any training we might need **(32)**. I try to **observe a group visit** at least once a quarter so that I can make sure that the session is still working as intended **(33)**. My manager has overall responsibility for **service standards**, so the education programme is covered in my **quarterly reports** which include a summary of teacher feedback and what action we have taken **(34)**. These are discussed in my annual appraisals.

Since we began to develop the education programme I have written a brief **education policy for the site**, based on one I was sent by a colleague from a neighbouring service. I will **review** this annually **(35)**. I have also arranged a **Criminal Records Bureau check** for those of us who work directly with schools, following advice from the council's child protection team **(36)**. We are covered by the council's **public liability insurance (37)**. We are also required to comply with the **Health and Safety at Work Act**. Responsibility for health and safety is in everybody's **job description**, including those of volunteers **(38)**.

Please see the next page for the Quality Indicator Reference List

Reference List

Reference no.	Quality Indicator
1	3e
2	2a, 5a
3	1d
4	1d
5	2a, 2b, 3d
6	5a
7	3a
8	5a
9	6a, 6d
10	3e
11	1c
12	1f
13	1d
14	1b
15	1a, 6a
16	6a, 6b, 6d
17	3c, 3d
18	3c, 6a
19	3a
20	6a, 6b
21	3a, 3b
22	3a, 3b, 3c
23	1c, 3b
24	3b
25	1e
26	3a
27	4a, 4b
28	4a, 4b
29	1f
30	4a, 4b
31	4c
32	4a, 4c
33	3f
34	5d
35	5b
36	6a, 6b, 6d
37	6c
38	6a, 6b

Further information

For more information about LOtC, the Quality Badge and learning through heritage, visit the following websites:

www.lotc.org.uk

www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk

www.gem.org.uk

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