

The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery

A Quick Gallery Guide for Teachers

Travel back in time and discover the history of The Potteries, including the world's greatest collection of Staffordshire ceramics, a World War II Spitfire, decorative arts and natural history. See items from the Staffordshire Hoard on display and let our collections inspire you.

What are the benefits of visiting a museum or gallery?

- Brings learning to life by providing real objects to handle and real places to explore.
- Promotes an understanding and appreciation of our rich heritage.
- Supports specific schemes of work and cross-curricular links.
- Inspires investigative and creative work back at school.

Our galleries promote interaction with our displays and you will find lots of fun things to do from dressing up and stories to read, to special trails around the museum. There's something for everyone and with so much to see, you might need a little help planning your visit. Here is a quick guide to get you started.

Natural History and Secret Garden

One of our most popular galleries with young children.

What can we see? A wide range of birds, small mammals and minibeasts, as well as rocks, minerals, fossils and plant life. To name just a few, we have: fish, frogs, swans and dragonflies in our Freshwater display and in the Field and

Hedgerow display inhabitants such as shrews, owls, badgers and foxes. Our huge buzzard can be spotted in the Limestone and Grassland display and you will definitely find some familiar faces of garden birds in our City and Town display. In our Moorland display you will find larger animals including red deer and even a wallaby!

What can we do? The list is endless...discover patterns in nature, habitats, food chains... The Learning Team can reserve a gallery space for your class to sketch items from our Natural History collection and even allow access to specimens from our stores.

Local History

Take a walk through history and let the displays tell their story of Stoke-on-Trent.

What can we see? Rooms from a typical nineteenth century terraced house and school. A fully furnished chemist, chip shop and a pub!

What can we do? Compare how people used to live with how we live now. Investigate what modern conveniences and appliances are missing from the different rooms. Listen to oral histories telling true stories of life in yesteryear. The Learning Team can arrange handling boxes of objects to use in the museum or you can hire our school loans boxes for use in school.

The Spitfire Gallery

Yes, the real thing! Our original Mark XVI Spitfire was designed by locally born Reginald Mitchell CBE.

What can we see? The Spitfire itself as well as its Merlin engines and components.

What can we do? Imagine you are a pilot soaring through skies in the Spitfire. Great inspiration for creative writing while studying World War II or famous local people. Before your visit you could hire our WWII Evacuees loans box to handle replica 1940s objects in the classroom.

Archaeology

Things people throw away tell us about the way they live. The first humans appeared in North Staffordshire about 12,000 years ago and this gallery shows us some of the things they left behind.

What can we see? Artefacts from local excavations including prehistoric pottery and early examples of tools and metal working. We have lots of Roman artefacts which include: The Lightwood Hoard (a hoard of

Roman coins), The Staffordshire Pan, jewellery, pottery, games and our charming Roman Facepot. Our medieval human skeleton from Hulton Abbey is always a big hit!

What can we do? Be a detective! Discover secrets about past peoples from the clues they have left behind... Then think about what clues we leave behind about ourselves and how we live– Discuss what people in a hundred years time might discover about us from our rubbish. Back at school you could make your own time capsule.

Art Gallery and Decorative Arts

Our unique collection of works of art.

What can we see? Not just paintings but sculptures, drawings, collage, textiles, portraits, landscapes and contemporary artworks from local colleges and universities. See artists such as Picasso, Lowry and Miro.

What can we do? Put yourself in the picture! Close your eyes, what can you hear? Birds singing, leaves rustling in the breeze, the laughter of the party, the whirring of machinery. What can you smell? Freshly cut grass, blossom on the trees. Look at colour and how artists use it to create moods and feelings. Think of the painting as a frame in a comic strip, what happened before or after this moment in time?

Ceramics

The world's finest collection of Staffordshire ceramics. Over 5000 pieces are on display on our galleries. These explain the history of manufacture and design in the pottery industry.

What can we see? Countless ceramics from medieval slipware to present day, passing Wedgwood, Minton, Susie Cooper and contemporary studio pottery along the way. Our famous Ozzie Owl slipware jug (as seen on The Antiques Roadshow!)

What can we do? Go on safari – see how many different animals you can find hiding in the gallery. See if you can spot the Minton Peacock and Monkey, the Bunnykins band and our herd of over 300 cowcreamers!

Staffordshire Hoard

The largest and most valuable Anglo-Saxon treasure ever found. Breathtakingly beautiful examples of delicate Saxon metalwork of Anglo-Saxon gold. The Hoard, in total, comprises of over 3500 pieces of gold, silver and garnets

What can we see? Stunning Anglo-Saxon gold inlaid with precious garnets. Objects on display vary – they are very famous and get whizzed away for photo shoots as well as research and conservation. The Hoard is mainly battle gear so examples of sword decoration such as pommel caps, hilt rings and hilt plates can be seen as well as a helmet cheek piece and religious crosses.

What can we do? The Anglo-Saxons loved riddles and the Hoard is no exception. They have hidden lots of animals and mythical creatures in their intricate patterns so it is an excellent starting point for literacy and art such as riddle writing. Create your own creatures and the myths and legends that surround them.

Your Visit

We advise that even self-guided visits are booked through our Learning Team so we can arrange the best possible visit for your class. Our exhibitions do change so exhibits are sometimes removed from display for touring exhibitions or conservation purposes. If you are coming to view a particular object please contact us to ensure it is currently on display.

We can pre-book gallery spaces and resources for you and also provide a lunch space so you can make the most of your coach costs and stay all day. We can even provide you with risk assessments to help with your planning.

So what are you waiting for? Start planning today and we hope to see you very soon!

Contact us:

e: museumeducation@stoke.gov.uk

t: 01782 232323

web: stoke.gov.uk/museum

The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Bethesda Street, City Centre, Staffordshire. ST1 3DW