

WARKWORTH CASTLE

NORTHUMBERLAND

Originally a motte and bailey stronghold, Warkworth Castle was updated throughout the Middle Ages by the Percy family, Earls of Northumberland. The castle is surrounded by a 12th-century curtain wall and dominated by a magnificent 15th-century keep. It offers fine opportunities for KS3 History and good cross curricular links at KS3.

Historical description

Warkworth was the Percys' principal seat for more than 500 years. They had a powerful influence on crown events – sometimes on the king's side and sometimes against. The castle beat off two attacks in 1327 when fighting the Scots for Edward II, and was later besieged, in 1405, by Henry IV in revenge of a plot to overthrow him.

Warkworth Castle was protected to the east, west and north by the River Coquet, and to the south by a strong battlemented curtain wall, a deep moat and a great gateway, flanked by two strong towers (the recess for a drawbridge, evidence of a portcullis, machicolations, arrow slits and guard chambers can still be seen).

Within the castle's bailey there are ruins of the chapel with a piscina for washing sacred vessels. A 'solar' or private chamber, with a cellar leads to the great Hall (note the remains of limewash on the walls of the solar and a Norman fireplace in the hall). There are doorways to the buttery and pantry, kitchen and larder (the floorplans are still visible). The three-storey keep is virtually intact. Inside the entrance there is a page's room (note the original earthen floor) and guard room with pit below which might have held prisoners. There are also store rooms; a great hall served by kitchens (two huge fireplaces can be seen); a chapel with a piscina, a sacristy for storing vestments, various suites of rooms in the upper floors; and a shaft that provide light to all floors and collected water. Separating the two baileys are the remains of the Collegiate Church – a sign of Percy greatness probably built following the example of Edward III's foundation at Windsor. Many of the castle buildings carry masons' marks.

Learning opportunities

Warkworth offers splendid opportunities for studying castle building, relations with the monarchy, the barons and the church within KS3: Medieval Realms. Preparation

for a visit should include looking at how castle fortification worked, how a medieval castle was used and the role of the Percy family in medieval society. Some of the scenes in Shakespeare's Henry IV Part One & Two are set at Warkworth Castle so the Castle would make a splendid backdrop for readings or enactment of these plays.

At KS2, Warkworth Castle offers good opportunities for in-depth cross curricular work. Studying the design of the fortifications could be linked to **Design and technology** and medieval weaponry such as siege machines could also be linked to **Science** (forces and motion) **Mathematics** would provide the basis for measuring and survey work using a variety of different measuring devices. Studying the position of the castle and investigating why the castle was built here could be linked to **Geography**. Views from the castle would provide good starting point for map and compass work. Evidence of domestic life such as the kitchen, buttery, laundry, brewhouse, pages' room, the guard room with its pit, the Great Hall, chapel and collegiate church could all be linked to role play and provide the stimulus for many projects in **English**. Imaginative and descriptive exercises could be built around events, activities and pageants connected with the castle and the wealthy Dukes of Northumberland. The prominent position and the structures within the castle could provide the starting point of a number of 2D and 3D projects in **Art** using a variety of different media. Secondary sources such as a medieval books of hours which give very lavish and graphic details of court life in late medieval times could help pupils understand what life must have been like in the castle.

Location

In Warkworth, 7½ miles S of Alnwick on A1068. OS map 81, grid reference NU 247057.

Opening hours

1 April-30 Sept 10am-6pm daily.

1 Oct-31 Oct 10am-4pm daily.

1 Nov-31 March **Weekends and Monday only.**

Facilities

Access for disabled people: all areas except upper levels of keep.

Parking: car park at main entrance. There is also space for one coach. Other coaches should park in Warkworth market place.

Picnics: permissible on site but please take all rubbish home.

Toilets: in car park. (Not suitable for disabled).

Shop: our custodians welcome school groups as all proceeds contribute towards the continuing work of English Heritage. Please assist by supervising pupils in the shop.

Free educational visits

Educational visits to English Heritage sites are free if booked at least fourteen days in advance via the regional office. When your booking is confirmed you will be sent a permit for a free planning visit.

Teachers are not permitted to use outside providers to lead educational activities on our sites.

Limit on party number: 150.

Minimum staff-pupil ratio: 1 to 15.

Contacts

Booking and site information: Education bookings, English Heritage, 41-44 Sandhill, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 3JF.

Tel: 0191 269 1227/8. Fax: 0191 261 1130.

Regional Education Officer: David Walmsley.

Custodian: Tel: 01665 711423.

Nearby and related sites

Other sites in English Heritage care include

Dunstanburgh Castle (Spectacular coastal location):

Norham Castle (Border castle with fine Norman

keep); **Lindisfarne Priory** (12th-century monastery on Holy Island), **Edlingham Castle.**

A guide to resources

Teacher handbooks (published by English Heritage Education)

Moffat, H, *Warkworth Castle*, English Heritage, 1998, ISBN 1-85074-636-2.

Copeland, T, *A Teacher's Guide to Using Castles*, 1993, ISBN 1-85074-327-4.

Barnes, J, *Design & Technology and the Historic environment*, 1999, ISBN 1-85074-651-6.

Collins, F, & Hollinshead, E, *English and the Historic Environment*, 2000, ISBN 1-85074-330-4.

Copeland, T, *Maths and the Historic Environment*, 1992, ISBN 1-85074-329-0.

Copeland, T, *Geography and the Historic Environment*, 1993, ISBN 1-85074-332-0.

Lockey, M, & Walmsley, D, *Art and the Historic Environment*, 1999, ISBN 1-85074-651-6.

Maddern, E, *Storytelling at Historic Sites*, 1992, ISBN 1-85074-378-9.

Fairclough, J, *History Through Role Play*, 1994, ISBN 1-85074-478-5.

Videos (available on free loan)

Mighty Monuments, investigating a medieval castle, 1996, 20 mins, suitable for KS3.

Castles of Northumberland, 1989, 24 mins, suitable for KS2 & 3.

Posters

Looking at Castles, 1994, ISBN 1-85074-490-4. Six A3 photocopyable posters showing different aspects of medieval castles.

Castles, full colour poster with teacher's notes.

Interpreting the Past, 1999, ISBN 1-85074-737-7.

Contains six posters and booklet with practical ideas for using impressions on site and in the classroom.

CD ROM

Real Castles, 2000, ISBN 1-90280401-5, with VR tour, interactive activities and 48-page book.

All English Heritage resources are available by post from English Heritage, c/o Gillards, Trident Works, Temple Cloud, Bristol BS39 5AZ. Tel: 01761 452966. Fax: 01761 453408.

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