Step into the stories of **MEDIEVAL CASTLE ACRE**

Almost 1,000 years ago, a knight called William de Warenne built a castle here. William’s son founded the Priory nearby and later his grandson replanned the village, surrounding Castle Acre with huge stone and earth defences.

**William de Warenne** was given lands across England to build castles, which helped the Normans hold on to power after their invasion from France.

I am William de Warenne. I fought for William the Conqueror at the Battle of Hastings in 1066.

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1. **Stop at the Gatehouse.** Can you see the Warenne family coat-of-arms – a shield with a checker-board pattern?
2. **Take a look at the Priory Wall.**
3. **Picture these Priory Fields** in medieval times, when the monks grew all their own food. Local peasants from the village worked on the land.
4. **The enormous Bailey Gate** was one of two gateways into the medieval village. It once had a large wooden portcullis – a heavy gate, which could be lowered to block the entrance. Spot the grooves where the portcullis once hung.
5. **Find the remains of the Castle Keep.** The Warenne family lived in this building and transformed it into a massive stone fortress. Imagine how impressive the castle would have looked in medieval times.
6. **Explore the Outer Bailey.** There were stables, storehouses, kitchens and living quarters here. Look for the impressions in the ground where the buildings once stood. How long would it take a soldier on guard duty to patrol around the bailey?
7. **Examine the wall of a House** on Bailey Street. Can you spot any carved stones from the Priory that have been reused in this building?
8. **Marvel at the massive Earthworks.** These deep ditches were built to defend the village in times of trouble.

**Did you know?** The Priory was abandoned and left in ruins, when King Henry VIII closed it down in 1537.

**Guide for School Walkers**
- This route to the Castle from the Priory is a gentle 15-minute stroll through Castle Acre village, taking in the sights along the way.
- Watch out for traffic when walking along the lanes.
- Access to the Castle is along a rough track and grass paths, unsuitable for wheelchairs.
- Explore the Bailey Gate and Castle with care as historic sites can be dangerous. There are slip and trip hazards, as well as some steep slopes and stairs at the Castle.
- Students should be supervised at all times.