



**JORVIK
VIKING
CENTRE**

Visual Story and Sensory Guide for School Visits



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How to use this guide for teachers and carers

This visual story and sensory guide is intended for school groups visiting JORVIK Viking Centre. If your group has booked Viking or archaeology workshops or a lunch space, there is a separate section at the end covering a visit to DIG, where workshops and lunches take place. If your group is having a DIG tour or visiting Barley Hall, we also have separate versions of this Visual Story and Sensory Guide about these sites too.

The text with grey background explains what happens at different points of your visit. The four icons highlight information related to what you might see, hear, smell or touch.

JORVIK is a highly sensory experience and can be overwhelming for some people. You can leave at any time during your visit, except when you're on board the ride. Please tell us of any special requirements that your pupils may have when completing our enquiry form or emailing schools@yorkat.co.uk about a booking.

Please note that whilst the Discover Coppergate gallery and ride are permanent displays, the contents of some of the gallery cases do change periodically. At the time of writing, JORVIK is hosting some artefacts on loan from the British Museum alongside our main collection of artefacts from York.

Arriving at JORVIK

When you arrive at JORVIK Viking Centre, a member of staff will ask you to line up in your group outside the main entrance. You will be standing in a queue line between our gift shop and a barrier.

If your group arrives particularly early, you might be asked to stand somewhere else nearby.

When you are standing behind the barrier you might need a wait for a few minutes until there is space for you inside the attraction.

Image: the entrance to JORVIK with barriers for queuing alongside the gift shop.





JORVIK is located on Coppergate Walk, which is a busy shopping street. You might see people going shopping or queuing for JORVIK. You might also see other school groups arriving or departing. On sunny mornings, the sunlight can be very bright in the queue line.



You might hear people talking as they queue for JORVIK or walk down the street. You might also hear music playing from nearby shops.



You might get a faint smell of the smells from the JORVIK ride. The JORVIK ride contains 11 different smells (see page 17) but before you get to the ride you will smell a combination of all of them. Outside JORVIK, you might also smell food from nearby cafes, or cigarette/vape smoke from passers-by.



There is nothing to touch in this area, but you might feel that the ground is slightly sloped.



Outside JORVIK you can expect to see some members of staff. Our Viking team will be wearing the sorts of clothes that the real Viking who lived in York 1,000 years ago might have worn. Some of them may have knives or swords with them, but these are blunt and in sheaths. You might also see our admissions team will be wearing modern clothes, usually a grey shirt or black jumper and black trousers.

Image: a member of Viking staff standing outside the entrance to JORVIK.





While you are waiting in the queue line, you will listen to one of our Viking team giving you an introduction to your visit. They might ask you some questions to find out how much you know about the Vikings. They might also give you some information about the JORVIK Viking Centre and the archaeological dig that took place on this site. They will also tell you some rules your group needs to follow on your visit.



Image: a member of our Viking team giving a school group an introductory talk outside JORVIK.

The Viking you have been talking to will then take you inside through our admissions area and lead you down stairs to the Discover Coppergate gallery. There is a lift if you need it. You can also collect ear defenders and a range of sensory toys from the Admissions desk to use during your visit. You are also welcome to bring your own additional resources.



Image: a member of staff seated behind the desk in the admissions area.

The JORVIK Viking Centre is an underground museum - this is the same level that the Viking street would have been 1,000 years ago, and also where our archaeologists found the remains of a Viking street during the dig here.



In the admissions area there is a large television screen with prices and information for other visitors. There are also some colourful pictures on the wall. On your way downstairs there will be a TV playing some short videos about the history of the museum.



You might hear our staff talking to visitors. You might hear the lift creak up and down. You might still hear some noises from the street outside.



The smells from our ride will be a bit stronger inside.



Image: the staircase down to the museum.

Discover Coppergate

In the Discover Coppergate gallery we have a large glass floor covering a model of the archaeological dig. The toilets are located behind doors in this room.

Our Viking staff will invite you to sit on benches on the glass floor - it is safe to walk on and sit here. Your group will then listen to a short talk using our Time Portal display.

You will spend approximately 10 minutes in this room.

Image: a Viking guide doing a talk using our Time Portal display.





You will see a large glass floor with a wooden walkway around the edge of the room. There will be one or two of our Viking staff here, who will show you the Portal and may encourage you to look at the model of the archaeological dig beneath the glass floor. There might also be members of the public looking around or queuing for the ride.

There is dim lighting in this room but there are lights at the bottom of the walls and underneath the glass floor. You might be able to see models of Viking artefacts and archaeological tools underneath the glass. Around the wooden walls there are images and silent videos on screens.



Our Viking staff will talk to you about a Viking street that used to be in this area. They will also tell you some information about what is going to happen on the ride, including some important safety instructions. You might hear other visitors talking in the background. You might also hear the sounds of doors opening and closing as visitors and staff go in and out of this room.



There is nothing to touch in this area, but you might feel that the glass floor is smooth beneath your feet. Our staff might ask you to move to different areas of the glass floor.



You might be able to smell the smells from the ride (see page 17).

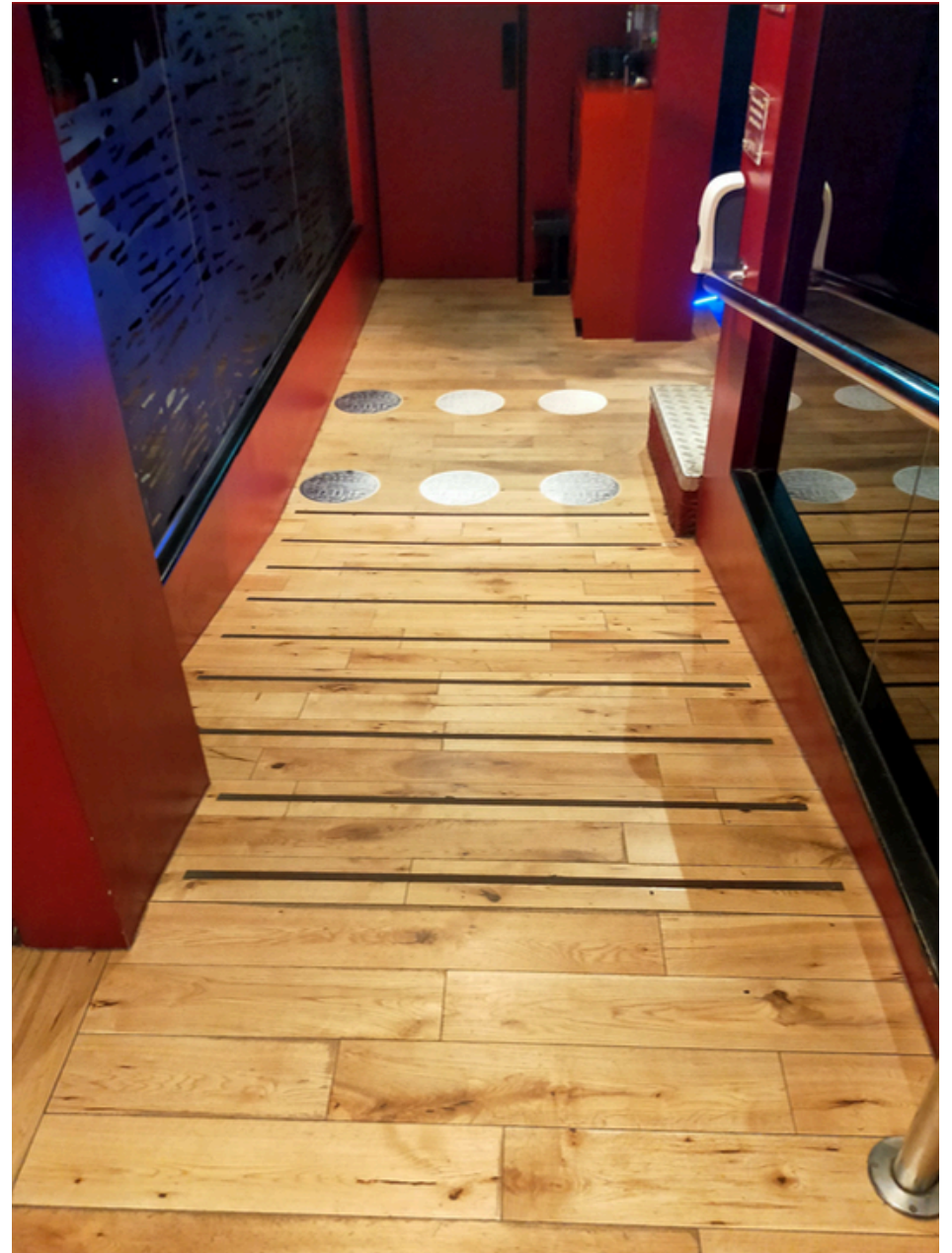
Boarding the Ride

When directed by our Viking staff, your group will walk down a wooden ramp towards the boarding area for our ride. You will be greeted by another member of our Viking team who will give you some instructions on how to safely board the ride by climbing into one of our capsules. You can only board the ride when you are told to do so.



The ride boarding area is well-lit but the entrance to the ride will look quite dark. This area can sometimes feel quite crowded if your whole group is queuing to board the ride together. You might see the capsules arriving and departing. They move slowly, and will stay at this speed when you are on the ride.

Image: The boarding area for the JORVIK ride.





You will hear our Viking staff telling you how to safely board the ride. The ride capsules make a mechanical hissing sound like a bus, and sometimes creak as they stop. You might also hear people talking on the capsules that have already set off, and the commentary from their speakers.



You will smell the smells on the ride more strongly here. **If you find smells overwhelming we recommend wearing a fabric face mask before the ride starts.**



As you climb aboard you will feel the smooth plastic of the capsule, and you might hold onto the metal bar. If you are tall you might feel the speakers behind your head when you sit down.



Image: one of the six-seat capsules on the ride.

The Ride

When you are seated in your capsule, our staff will close the metal bar and your capsule will start moving. Just before the ride sets off, the Viking staff will ask you to choose the language for your commentary from the touch-screen in front of you. Our ride lasts 16 minutes, and you will stay sitting in your capsule the entire time.



You will touch a flag image to select the language of your commentary. You won't need to touch the screen again. If you have a bag you will either hold it or put it on the floor by your feet.



Your capsule will start moving along a slightly dark corridor lit by coloured lights. **We have lanterns you can borrow if you would like some extra light.** On your screen, you will watch a short video explaining that you are "going back in time" to the Viking age. The screen will look quite bright. You will also see images of artefacts that inspired different scenes of the ride.



The short introductory video will include some music and sounds from different time periods. When it has finished, you will listen to a commentary talking about the different scenes on the ride. These sounds will come from the built-in speakers behind your head.

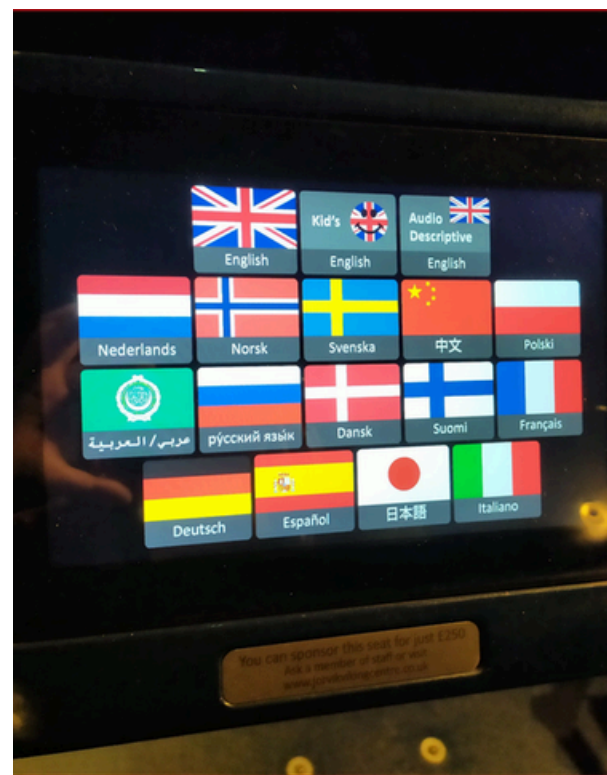


Image: the screens on the capsules showing the language options.

After the time-travel video has finished, your capsule will have turned a corner and you will start your journey around our recreated Viking streets. Here we have created scenes showing life in the Viking city of Jorvik.



You will see animatronic models of Viking people. They look a lot like real people, but they stay in one place and only move their hands and heads. You might also see some animatronic animals, such as dogs, cats, birds, rats and pigs; these also stay in one place and only move their heads.

Image: one of the Viking scenes on the ride showing an animatronic hunter and dog standing by a tree.





There are lots of sounds on the ride which overlap with each other. You will hear your commentary through the built-in speakers behind your head, but there are also additional sounds at different scenes on the ride. These include:

- Bird calls
- People talking in many languages
- Sounds of the sea
- A woman singing
- A dog barking
- Fire crackling
- Sounds from the animatronics and capsules (hissing and creaking as they move; these are normal sounds for the ride when it is moving)

None of the sounds are very loud, but multiple overlapping sounds may become overwhelming. **You might prefer to wear ear defenders - we have some on the admissions desk which you can borrow.**

Towards the end of the ride, you might hear people climbing off the ride and talking as they enter the galleries.



There are lots of different smells on the ride to show you how the Viking city of Jorvik would have smelt 1,000 years ago. There are different smells for the different areas on the ride, as shown on the map below.



Smells Key

- 01 Trees and Plants
- 02 Burnt Wood
- 03 Woodsmoke
- 04 Molten Iron
- 05 Oak Tree
- 06 Fish Smells
- 07 Candles
- 08 Leather Hide
- 09 Fruit and Vegetables
- 10 Church Incense
- 11 Toilet Smells

At the end of the ride you will see a member of our Viking team waiting for you. They will welcome you back and open the bars of the capsule so you can climb out. You must wait for the capsule to stop and for the bar to be opened before you stand up and climb out.



As your capsule arrives, you will see the entrance to the galleries. The galleries are not very brightly lit, but it will be brighter than it was on the ride.



Your capsule might make some mechanical sounds as it stops. You might hear people talking as they look around the galleries.



As you climb out of the capsule, you will feel the smooth plastic of the capsule. There is also a metal handrail.



Image: a Viking staff member waiting to help visitors exit the ride.

The Galleries

After the ride, you will arrive in our galleries. There are three galleries, which also include the Coppergate Wharf and Coinstrike areas. After you exit the ride, a Viking staff member will talk to you in the first gallery. They will discuss what you learnt from the ride experience and tell you about some of the artefacts on display.



Image: the first gallery room



You will see Viking-age artefacts such as jewellery, brooches, combs, shoes and environmental remains. These are displayed in glass cases. There is printed information on white panels beneath each case, and on the grey walls between the cases.

In the first gallery there are two human skeletons on display. There is also a touch-screen display about one of the skeletons. The light levels in the galleries are quite low. This is to protect the artefacts.



You will hear our Viking staff talking to your group and asking you questions. From the first gallery space you will also be able to hear the mechanical sounds of the ride.

You will also hear sounds from the other galleries, such as other visitors talking, musical instruments, and banging from the Coinstrike area at the end of the galleries.



Sometimes our Viking team will have replica artefacts that they might let you to touch or hold. These objects could have a range of textures, such as wood, stone, metal or fabric. You can also touch the touch-screen in the first gallery.



You will still be able to smell the smells from the ride in the galleries, but they won't be as strong.

Our Viking staff will then lead you into the second gallery and then show you to the Coppergate Wharf. You might have some extra time looking around this space before or after your talk at the Coppergate Wharf. The sounds and smells are the same as in the first gallery but there are some different sights and things to touch.



In the second gallery you will see even more Viking-age artefacts in glass cases such as pots, bowls, tools, textiles and much more. These are displayed in glass cases.

There are two screens in the second galleries. One is a silent video about Viking-age wood and the other is a touch-screen about Viking music. There are also some wooden boards with questions and illustrations which you can pick up next to some of the cases.

You might see other school groups and members of the public looking around too.



In the second gallery there are the wooden boards with questions and illustrations you can pick up. There is a magnetic game board mounted to the wall which you can touch.



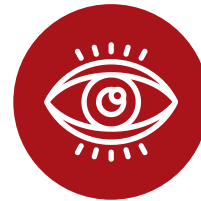
Image: part of the second gallery with Viking-age artefacts displayed in glass cases.

The Coppergate Wharf

In the second gallery we have a reconstruction of a Viking wharf, or boat landing. One of our Vikings will ask your group to sit on the benches in front of the wharf, or on the floor nearby. They or another Viking will give you a talk for around 5 minutes.



Image: a Viking guide standing in front of the Coppergate Wharf.



Our Viking staff will show you some replica objects from the wharf. Some of these will be replicas of the real objects in the gallery. Some of these objects will be quite unusual, such as animal furs, weapons and tools that were used by the Vikings. The image on the wall is backlit and doesn't move.



You will hear our Viking staff telling you about the objects. They might ask you to guess what the objects are and ask you questions.

You will also be able to hear other visitors in the Gallery and some banging from the coinstrike area at the end of the galleries.



Our Viking staff might let you touch or hold objects. These could be from a range of materials such as metal, wood, fabric or bone. You will get to see the object before you hold it.

If you are sitting on a bench you will be able to feel the sheep fleece on top of the wood of the bench. If you are sat on the floor you will feel the hard smooth wood of the floor.



You will still be able to smell the smells from the ride in the galleries, but they won't be as strong. You may be able to smell the dried fish hanging on the wall.



Image: the benches you may sit on whilst listening to a talk from a Viking staff member at the Coppergate Wharf.

Coinstrike

The Viking staff will then direct you to our coinstrike area. You will stand in front of a wooden fence and perspex screen, and a member of our Viking team will stand behind this fenced area.

You will stand and listen to them tell you about Viking money for a few minutes. They will make a replica Viking coin for your group by placing a blank coin between two stamps and hitting it with a hammer.



This third gallery room can get quite busy and crowded when a large group gathers around the Coinstrike.

This area is more well-lit than other areas of the gallery. The protective screens around the coinstrike area can be shiny and reflective.

The coinstrike area has been designed to look like a small Viking-age building, with fences and walls made from woven wood, and some furs and plants hanging up.



Image: a Viking staff member at the coinstrike area.



You will hear our Viking staff telling you about Viking coins. You might also hear the sounds of other visitors or music from the other galleries.

The hammer hitting the coin stamps makes a loud bang. **You might prefer to wear ear defenders in this area - we have some on the admissions desk which you can borrow.**



Our Viking staff might give you a replica metal coin to hold.



You will still be able to smell the smells from the ride in the galleries, but they won't be as strong. There may also be a faint smell of lavender when bundles are hung up in the coinstrike area from time to time.



Image: children being shown an a large printed Viking coin by a staff member at the coinstrike.

When you have finished talking to our Viking coin striker, you will be directed upstairs to the exit through the gift shop. You will then be back at street level. If you need the lift, you will go back to the Discover Coppergate area and exit through our admissions area. If your group is visiting the Gift Shop or the toilets, you will re-enter from street level.

Gift Shop and Exit



In the gift shop you can see lots of toys and gifts for sale. It is brighter than the galleries and you will be able to see the street outside through the windows. The gift shop often gets quite crowded. You will also see our retail staff behind the desk - they will be wearing grey shirts or black jumpers and black trousers.



Image: the JORVIK Viking Centre gift shop.



You will hear people talking and buying items from the shop. You might hear the tills printing receipts. You might also hear music playing. The gift shop can sometimes be quite noisy when it is busy.



Some of the items for sale will have smells, such as soaps and fragrances.



You can pick up items to help you decide what to buy. The gifts and toys for sale will have a range of different textures.



Image: a member of our retail staff serving a customer in the gift shop.

You have now reached the end of your visit to JORVIK Viking Centre! If your school has booked a workshop or lunch space as well, please read on.

Workshops and Lunch Spaces

If your school has booked a lunch space or workshop as part of your trip, this is located at another of our attractions, DIG: An Archaeological Adventure.

The workshops that take place at DIG are:

- Battle Tactics
- Viking Sagas
- Anglo-Saxon and Viking Medicine
- Traders, Looters or Settlers?
- Life in a Roman Town
- Tracks of the Past

DIG is a five minute walk from JORVIK, and is located in St Saviour's Church.

Image: DIG: An Archaeological Adventure from the outside.



You will enter DIG through two sets of double doors. Your lead teacher/group leader will check you in at the desk, meanwhile the rest of your group will wait either outside or in the entrance.



The building of DIG is a converted medieval church. From the outside you will see light-coloured stone walls and a tall tower. Inside, there are high ceilings and large arched windows which let in lots of light.



Due to the shape of the building inside, DIG can get very loud. There is lots of open space and hard surfaces so sound travels and echoes a lot, especially if there are multiple school groups. We have a small number of ear defenders available and subject to availability, we also have a quiet space if you get overwhelmed. Our garden (see pages 35-36) is always available if you need a quieter space.



Image: the entrance to DIG: An Archaeological Adventure.



Inside DIG, your group will walk past the front desk, where you will see one or two members of staff. They will be wearing grey shirts or black jumpers and black trousers. On your left you might see another school group or families listening to a talk. On your right you will see our gift shop. Your group will walk past these areas to go upstairs to the lunch room or workshop room.



If anyone in your group experiences sensory processing difficulties on a trip to DIG, you can collect ear defenders and a range of sensory toys from the Admissions desk to use during your visit. You are also welcome to bring your own additional resources.

Image: a member of the DIG team standing behind the desk at the entrance to DIG. The toilets are through the archway behind the desk.



Near the stairs, you will see a lift, toilets and lockers. If you are coming to DIG for a workshop, our staff might ask you to put your bags in our lockers before sending you upstairs. Sometimes this area can get quite busy if multiple groups are using the toilets or storing or collecting their bags at the same time.



Image: the toilets and locker area of DIG.

Your workshop leader might meet your group at the bottom of the stairs to introduce themselves and tell you some rules, before leading you upstairs. Your group will walk up the stairs in single file and then turn left to the Lunch Room or right to the Classroom. There is also a lift if you need it.



Image: the stairs to the first floor at DIG.



Image: at the top of the stairs at DIG.



The upstairs of DIG is mostly offices, so you might see some other members of staff walking along the corridors.

The DIG Classroom

All of our Viking- and archaeology-themed workshops take place in the DIG Classroom.

Your workshop leader will present from the front of the room, near a table with props and objects. They will tell your group to sit on the carpet in front of the table, and ask your teachers to sit on the chairs at the back.

During the workshop, your workshop leader might ask for volunteers to stand at the front with them and do some acting or hold objects. They might ask your whole group to stand up and move around to do some activities and roleplay.

Your workshop will last for approximately 45 minutes.

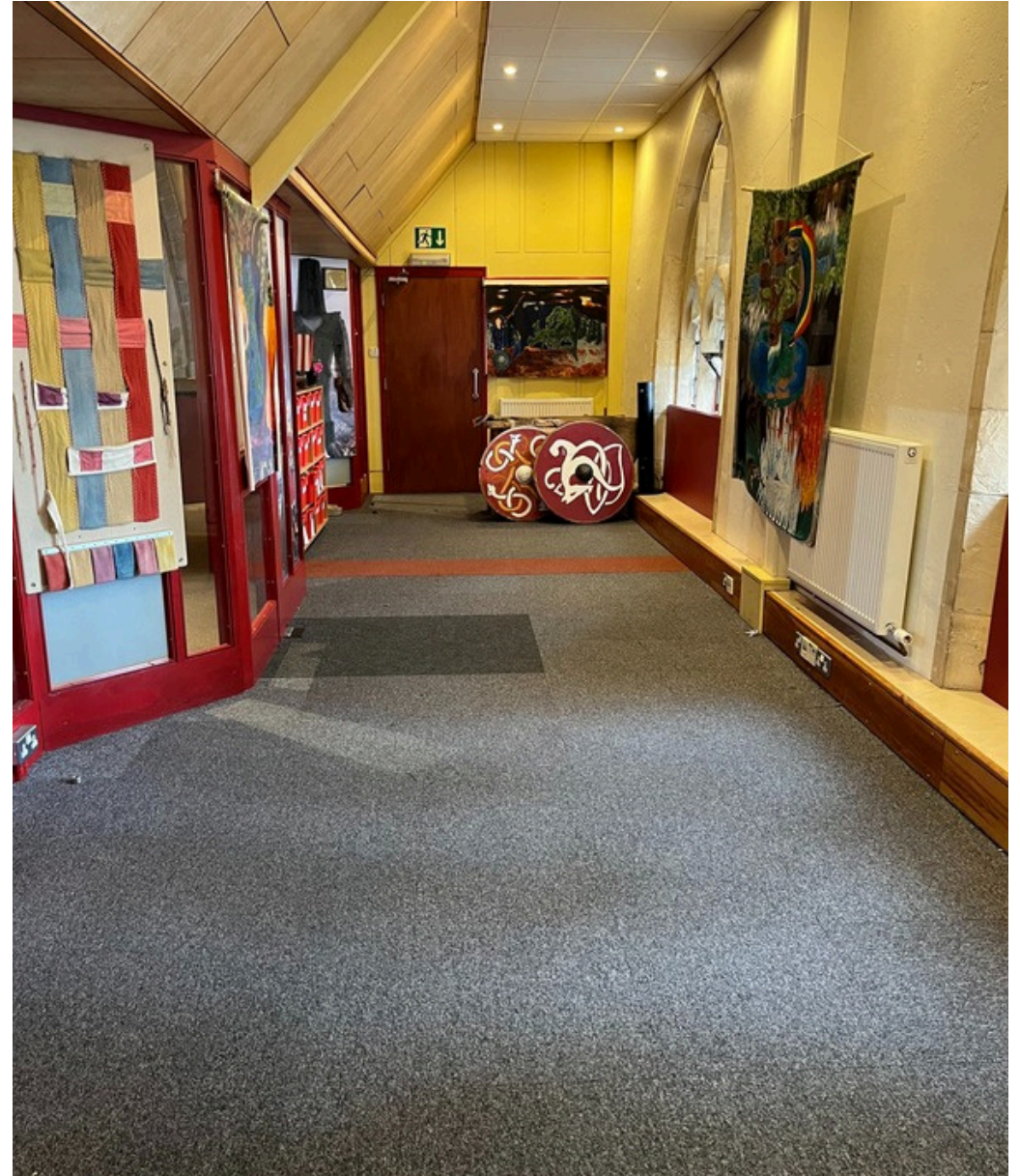


Image: the DIG Classroom.



In the DIG Classroom you will see some colourful wall hangings and some Viking-themed props such as shields and a mail shirt. Depending on which workshop you are having, there will be an assortment of unusual objects and props on the table at the front.

There is a strip of red-coloured carpet across the floor which your workshop leader will ask you to sit behind, and there are two large windows to the right.



During your workshop, your workshop leader will talk to you and encourage your class to put their hands up to answer their questions. They might ask you to shout out answers or make loud noises all together. Sometimes you can hear the noise of traffic or building work through the windows in the Classroom.



No strong-smelling objects are used in any of our workshops, but during the Anglo-Saxon and Viking Medicine workshop there might be a faint smell of herbs and flowers.



During the workshop, you will be sitting on the carpet and be able to feel it with your hands. **We also have wobble cushions - please ask your workshop leader if you would like one.**

Your workshop leader might ask for volunteers to stand up at the front and hold objects. They might also pass objects around to everyone seated on the floor.



If you are having a Viking-themed workshop (Battle Tactics, Viking Sagas or Anglo-Saxon and Viking Medicine), your workshop leader will be dressed as a Viking. They might also be wearing a knife or sword, but these are blunt and in sheaths. If you are having a Battle Tactics workshop, there will be lots of blunt replica Viking weapons on the table behind them.



Image: one of our Viking workshop leaders in the Classroom at DIG ready to begin a Viking Battle Tactics workshop.



If you are having an archaeology-themed workshop (Traders, Looters or Settlers?, Life in a Roman Town or Tracks of the Past), your workshop leader will be wearing a grey shirt or black fleece jacket and black trousers, and will also have a lanyard. If you are having a Traders, Looters or Settlers? workshop they might be wearing Viking clothes. The classroom will be set up with tables with archaeology-themed activities laid out on them.



Image: some pupils looking at tree rings in their archaeology-themed workshop.

If you are having an archaeology-themed workshop (Traders, Looters or Settlers?, Life in a Roman Town or Tracks of the Past), there will be two parts to your workshop:

1

Your workshop leader will begin the workshop by talking to you about either Viking, Roman or Prehistoric archaeology, and showing you some objects.

They might ask for volunteers to stand at the front with them and do some acting or hold objects. They might write words on the whiteboard, or stick keyword cards on the board.

Image: a school pupil standing at the front of the DIG Classroom during an archaeology-themed workshop.



2

For the next part of your archaeology workshop your group will be split into smaller groups to complete activities at the tables. All of the equipment you need will be on the tables.

You will spend a few minutes completing each activity in your groups, before your workshop leader asks you to tidy up your activity and move onto another table. At the end of the workshop, they might ask you to sit on the carpet again and talk about what you have learnt.



These table-top activities will involve touching a range of different materials, which your workshop leader will tell you about before you begin. **We have gloves available if you would prefer not to touch certain materials.**



Image: a group of children take part in an activity you might complete during the 'Traders, Looters or Settlers' or 'Life in a Roman Town' workshops.

The DIG Lunch Room



Our lunch room is a wide open mezzanine with tables and benches for your group to use. There is a balcony, but this is blocked by some sound-absorbing screens. From the lunchroom you can also see into the Classroom and some of the offices.



From the lunch room you will be able to hear the sounds of DIG tours downstairs. You might hear children chatting excitedly and our staffing talking to them loudly.



If there have been groups using the lunch room before you, you might smell their food.



Image: the DIG Lunchroom

The DIG Garden

In the summer months, your group might eat your lunches in the garden. If you are early for your workshop, our staff might ask you to wait in the garden before your workshop. To get to the garden, your group will use the back door, which is near the toilets and the stairs.



Image: the back door to the garden.



Image: part of the DIG garden.



In the garden you will see a stone path made from old grave stones and bricks. There are lots of bushes, plants and two large trees. You will also see some old pieces of stone from the medieval church.



You might hear birds and the trees rustling. You might also hear cars passing on the road or people talking as they walk along the street.



There are lots of scented plants in the garden, such as rosemary, lavender, sage and thyme.



You can touch some of the plants, but watch out for stinging nettles and insects!



Image: the DIG garden