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**NATIONAL
GALLERIES OF
SCOTLAND**



NATIONAL GALLERIES OF SCOTLAND RECEIVES SANDFORD AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN HERITAGE EDUCATION

The National Galleries of Scotland schools programme has been awarded the prestigious Sandford Award for Heritage Education. The Sandford Award, presented by the Duke of Wessex at a ceremony at Windsor Castle, is the only independent benchmarking of educational excellence in the heritage sector in the UK and recognises quality and excellence in educational services and facilities.

The entrants were assessed by a panel of independent Judges including OFSTED Inspectors, former head teachers, education consultants and heritage-property-based education officers. The judges praised the National Galleries of Scotland for ‘*a commitment to helping children explore the collections themselves and making them feel confident about their ideas about paintings and artists.*’

The National Galleries of Scotland schools programme is an established part of the Galleries’ education activity and attracts thousands of pupils and teachers every year. Schools visitors to the National Galleries of Scotland are invited to investigate the Galleries collection, linking what they see to their own experiences. Working alongside artists and art historians in the gallery space pupils and teachers are encouraged to think creatively and independently. Guided visits usually focus on four or five artworks enabling visitors to explore the work fully through investigation, gallery-based activities and lively discussion. Pupils use transferable skills such as looking, describing,

discussing, analysing and making; all of which contribute to the overall learning experience. Artworks are used to explore all subject areas creatively, promoting cross-curricular learning and helping children develop the four capacities of the Curriculum for Excellence.

The Sandford Award judge's said: *National Galleries Scotland offer a programme for schools which is accessible, welcoming and places the collections at the heart of all school activities and events. Central to their schools programmes is a commitment to helping children explore the collections themselves and making them feel confident about their ideas about paintings and artists. NGS schools programmes are developed to encourage learning how to look and enjoy what they see: Two comments stand out for me: a pupil saying that she had enjoyed looking at a painting because at first glance it looked dull and like something that you would just walk past, and another from a Cultural Coordinator saying that her group had been 'ecstatic' at the end of their visit with lots of ideas to take back to the classroom.*

The Sandford Award Scheme currently encompasses 200 historic sites within the historical and cultural environments of the United Kingdom and Ireland and including historic houses, museums, galleries, cathedrals, places of worship, gardens, landscapes and historic artefacts.

For further information and images please contact the National Galleries of Scotland's press office on 0131 624 6325/6247/6314/6332 or pressinfo@nationalgalleries.org.

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