

AINA CASE STUDY

CULTURAL HERITAGE

The Thames Tapestry



Each tapestry is unique and different - this picture of the famous regatta was created by a school in Henley on Thames

Involving schools from the source to the sea

The Thames Tapestry project was established to encourage children to learn more about all aspects of the river and is managed by the Millennium Tapestry Company in partnership with the Thames Heritage Trust. This operates on a not-for-profit basis and runs collaborative projects for schools that support and enrich the curriculum. The Thames Tapestry supports and enriches the National Curriculum for Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 and also allows children to develop their creativity whilst acquiring a number of work-related skills.

Between 2010 and 2012, the project invited 240 primary schools along the Thames corridor to create a one metre square tapestry which helps show how the river has shaped and influenced their local communities. The finished works combine to reflect a multi-faceted portrait of the Thames from source to sea and are guided by one of four subject briefs which encourage study of the river: nature and caring for the environment, river-linked work activities, sport and recreation, and local history and architecture.

Each school was allocated a specific stretch of river, which was divided into five reaches with individual characteristics: Upper Thames, Middle Thames, Upper Tideway, Central Tideway and the Estuary. Briefs were prepared for each reach to reflect local use, landscapes, architecture and activities and organisations such as the River Thames Alliance, Port of London Authority and River Thames Society all contributed ideas and knowledge. Information also included useful guidance to help progress essential weaving and sewing and seminars were held to support teachers and show examples of tapestries from previous projects. Resource packs included carpet canvas, materials and implements.

The final outcome has been a colourful and educational portrait of the Thames through the eyes of children which will encourage their continued interest in our inland waterways. A series of exhibitions have displayed the tapestries at venues such as St Paul's Cathedral, the Mansion House, Windsor Guildhall and the Royal Festival Hall. A wide range of sponsors became involved as the project progressed and their support has helped create a long term artistic legacy which celebrates the Royal River.

Further details can be seen at www.goldentapestry.com/thamesheritagetapestry