

Tarves Heritage Centre

and Victorian Schoolroom

Schoolroom script

**Before coming to the Museum**

To give the children the best experience please make sure that you are familiar with the script.

**Characters**

Teacher – Mr/Miss - *your own name here*  
Assistant Teacher – Mr/Miss - *a helper)*

**Timetable**

Entrance and seating *(5 mins)*  
Register and hand and shoe inspection *(10 mins)*  
Prayer, hymn, Bible reading and moral homily *(10 mins)*  
Chanting of tables *(5 mins)*  
Money lesson to be written on the slates *(10 mins)*  
Spelling chanted *(5 mins)*  
Writing practice – a suitable moral homily or proverb – on slates at first – best writers (front row) use pen and ink *(15 mins)*  
Drill *(5 mins)*Life in Victorian Britain  
Prayer

**Getting started**The school bell is rung by the teacher.

*The children will be lined up at either side of the classroom – boys at one side and girls at the other*.

The pupils are introduced by the teacher to him/herself and the assistant teacher. Pupils are addressed at all times by their surname. The pupils are allocated seats and the register is checked.

*When their name is called the children should step forward, say “Present Mr/Miss ‘teacher’s name’ and stand by their seat until further instruction is given.*

**Greeting the class**

Once the class are at their seats, the teacher will begin by saying good morning to the children and telling them that they should reply in unison. “Good morning, Mr \Miss *teacher’s name*”. They will then be told “class be seated”.

The teacher should then inform the children of the basic rules of the classroom – these should include sitting up straight with hands behind their backs; remaining silent unless given permission to speak; raising their hands to answer a question and standing up if chosen to answer and adding Mr/Miss *teacher’s name* or Mr/Miss *assistant teacher’s name* after they have answered, being respectful and attentive to the teachers at all time and so on. It should be pointed out that the belt will be used should any pupils find themselves unable to respond in the correct and expected manner.

**Hand and shoe inspection**

The assistant teacher will carry out the hand and shoe inspection and the pupils should be instructed to “proffer their hands” on the desk so that they can be inspected and turn their shoes to the aisle for the same purpose.

*Those pupils whose hands and shoes are dirty or unkept will be asked to stand beside their desks.*

This is an opportunity for the teacher to expound the virtues of cleanliness. Perhaps mentioning “Cleanliness is next to Godliness” and urging the pupils to have a clean mind as well as a clean body. Well done for having clean hands and shoes.

**Prayers**

The assistant teacher will then lead the class in a prayer – pupils should close their eyes and put their hands together. The assistant teacher teaches it line by line and then asks the pupils to say it all together.

*God be in my hand and in my understanding, (Pupils repeat)  
God be in mine eyes and in my looking,  
God be in my mouth and in my speaking,  
God be in my heart and in my thinking,  
God be at my end and at my departing*

**The Maths Lesson**

Miss/Mr *teacher’s name* will now lead the children in learning one of the tables (this is at the discretion of the teacher depending on the age of the class). This should be chanted with all the children joining in. The teacher can be walking between the desks ensuring that all the class are complying.

*Questions based on the table should then be asked and one child (chosen beforehand and briefed so that it is not too much of a shock!) should give a wrong answer and be sent to the dunce’s stool for their stupidity. They should be told that paying such little attention can only result in leaving school at 13 and gaining an unskilled and poorly paid job.*

The teacher should then introduce the need to know about and be able to handle money. This is an essential skill in life and one that they would do well to pay great attention to if they want to progress into employment.

The maths lesson should then move on to learning about money and the teacher should tell the pupils about £ s d. (This is already written on the blackboard for you.) He/she can recite something like

4 farthings make a penny  
2 halfpennies make one penny  
6 pennies make a sixpence  
12 pennies make a shilling  
2 shillings and 6 pennies make half a crown  
5 shillings 1 crown  
4 crowns make £1  
20 shillings make £1

Good use should be made of the pointer to demonstrate what they are learning.

*The children then copy on their slates what they have just been taught.*

**The Spelling Lesson (choose words they are already learning in class)**

The next lesson should be spelling and the words to be practised are also written on the board. These should be chanted altogether first and then by individual children.

**The Writing Lesson**

The teacher should emphasise the need for practice and repetition in learning spelling – and also in practising handwriting. The moral on the board should be used and the pupils should be directed to think carefully about the meaning of this – and think about how it should apply in their own lives. A child should be chosen to distribute the slate pencils to the class. The teacher should teach the rudiments of writing – light upstroke, firm downstroke, don’t lift the slate pencil/pen until the end of the word and then dot the i’s and stroke the t’s.

*Both teacher and assistant should then move between the desks as the writing is practiced. The children should be reminded that they should only write with their right hand – explain that anyone caught writing with their left hand will be made to sit on it and write with their right. The conversation could be directed between the adults rather than shouting directly at the children if it is felt that they might need more gentle treatment!*

**Drill**

By this stage, the pupils will likely be fed up sitting – a good time to introduce drill! “A healthy body means a healthy mind”. Again, this is an opportunity for the teacher to emphasise the virtues of exercise and how it affects the mind. The assistant teacher will conduct the drill session.

Stand to the side of your desks. Heads up, shoulders back, feet together, hands by sides. Follow my actions as I count. 1-2-3-and 4 1-2-3-and-4.

*Repeat each exercise 4 times:*

1. *Hands on shoulders – hands and arms straight above the head – hands on shoulders - hands by sides.*
2. *Hands on shoulders – hands and arms straight out to the sides – hands on shoulders - hands by sides*
3. *Hands on shoulders –* *hands and arms straight out to the front – hands on shoulders - hands by sides*
4. *Hands and arms straight out to the front – bend to touch the toes – rise, hands out in front – hands by sides*
5. *Marching on the spot – using arms and legs. Left, right, left, right, heads up, shoulders back etc.*

*Finish with the commands – Class stop and Class sit*

The teacher should again take over and talk about some of the pictures/maps on the wall. At the back of the room are the Duthies who provided much local support in a variety of ways around the village. Their generosity of spirit and dedication to the village could be expounded. Queen Victoria’s portrait is above the fireplace and a map of the British Empire is on the same wall a little further back. This is a good opportunity to discuss the Queen, her husband and family and / or look at the countries that make up the British Empire.

*Victoria came to the throne in 1837 at the age of 18 and it should be noted that she was helped over the years by God to bear the burdens of her position – her duties and responsibilities as a wife, mother and a queen. She married Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg in 1840 and they had 9 children – Victoria, Albert, Alice, Alfred, Helena, Louise, Arthur, Leopold and Beatrice. The countries of the Empire are all in pink on the map and Victoria’s status as ruler of them all should be emphasised. Empire Day – May 14th – was celebrated from 1897. The imports from the various British possessions might be mentioned*

*India – rice, cotton, indigo and spices  
Ceylon – coffee, tea, rice, coconuts pearls  
Australia – gold, wool, hides, tallow, copper, tin  
Tasmania – wool, wheat and timber  
Canada – wheat, timer, furs and petroleum  
West Indies – sugar, rum, fine woods*

**Lesson recap**

The teacher and assistant teacher could take it in turns to ask questions that the inspector is likely to ask when he visits tomorrow. The questions should be based on the previous lessons.

Q What is next Godliness  
 A Cleanliness  
 Q What is 5 times 6?  
 A 30  
 Q How many pennies in half a crown?  
 A 30  
 Q Choose a word to spell  
 A ------  
 Q What is the name of the husband of our gracious Queen Victoria?  
 A Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg  
 Q Name three countries ruled by our queen and part of the British Empire  
 A India, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Ceylon etc.  
 Q What goods do we import into our fair land from Ceylon?  
 A Tea, coffee, rice, coconuts and pearls

If the teacher is satisfied with the answers given then the children should be congratulated for their attention to their lessons and be commended to their future studies.

The day should end with a prayer led by the teacher (line by line) with children standing by their desks with their hands together and eyes closed.

*The school day through we’ve laboured,  
With Thou our guard and guide,  
Our sins forgive and let us live,  
Lord Jesus, by thy side.*

Class chants “Good afternoon, Mr/Miss *teacher’s name’* and the same to the assistant teacher before the role-play is ended. At this point it may be appropriate to set up a few ‘scenes’ for photographs and, time permitting, a debriefing should involve the children in sharing their feelings and impressions of schooling at that time.