

**Orkney Schools Metasaga**  
**Welcome to the**  
**Westray School Metasaga**



**Explore our island**

**Think your thoughts**

**Find your voice**



**ORKNEY SCHOOLS OF AMBITION**  
ISLANDS LEARNING TOGETHER

# **Orkney Schools Metasaga**

## **Developing Leadership at all Levels**

**What's it all about?**

**A Metasaga is like a philosophical treasure hunt. It allows you to explore an area, but at the same time it helps you discover yourself.**

**On the front page of our metasaga booklet it says “Explore our island...Think your thoughts...Find your voice”**

**When you visit a metasaga site you are asked to consider your opinions and to ponder your beliefs. You have to reflect on who and what you hold dear, to contemplate what is really important to you and fathom that which you will not compromise.**

**Taking part in a Metasaga will help you understand yourself in a meaningful way. It encourages you to think and consider your place in the world and your relationships with others.**

**Inspiration for developing the Metasaga came from Kate Coutts, Headteacher at Uyeasound Primary School in Unst, Shetland.**

**Kate had been initially been inspired by the work of Leif Jossefson (Metafari) in Tanzania.**

**For further information go to: <http://metafari.blogspot.com/search/label/Metasaga>**

**Metasaga is a journey through the culture, heritage and physical landscape. It allows leaders at all levels to engage in deep self-reflection by exploring their environment. It makes leaders at all levels reframe their thinking using metaphor, narrative, tradition and artifacts found in their own physical environment. It combines the business techniques of non-directive coaching, dialogue and appreciative inquiry with the traditional storytelling teaching of our culture, the Norse saga.**

**Impetus for taking forward Metasaga as a highly motivational and interactive leadership tool was generated by colleagues from Orkney who took part in the original Metasaga experience in Shetland in summer 2008. They recommended that the tool be embedded as part of Orkney's Schools of Ambition project.**

### **Planning**

**Pupils and staff from each of the 6 secondary schools attended a central conference. Each school was in the process of developing a Metasaga. They had explored the catchment area of their own school and identified key stopping points.**

**Pupils researched each stop and developed a series of reflective and interpretive questions. The schools then created a Metasaga in their community.**

**Each school visited a neighbouring school to trial their Metasaga. Participants could then post their responses on-line.**

**A strategy group then chose an activity from each of the schools to create an Orkney wide Metasaga. This will also be posted on the internet using the Education service's website.**

**Orkney Schools Metasaga was developed in partnership with Orkney Schools of Ambition and an Orkney - Shetland Islands staff initiative for developing leadership skills.**

#### **Participating schools:**

**Kirkwall Grammar School**

**North Walls Community School**

**Sanday Community School**

**Stromness Academy**

**Stronsay Junior High School**

**Westray Junior High School**



## No.1-Castle O' Burrian

The Castle O' Burrian is one of Orkney's most well known puffin colonies. It is just a short walk from the car park to the top of the cliffs at Rapness. You can look across at the nearby stack and watch the puffins pop in and out of their burrows. These small comical birds are great fun to watch. They are usually here from April-August.



One of the early Christian settlers made his lonely hermitage on this rock stack.  
You can just see the ruin.

### Interpretive Questions:

*What colours are on the puffin's beak?*

*What do puffins eat?*

*How many can you see?*

*What is a hermit?*

*What was the old mill at Rapness used for?*



**Reflective Question:**

**̄ Sometimes, when you do something new and scary,  
people say it is like jumping off a cliff.**



*When have you taken a risk?*

*What did it feel like?*

*How did it work out?*

## No. 2-Lady Kirk

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The Lady Kirk is also known as St Mary's church. Most of what you see at Lady Kirk today was erected in 1674. However this church reused the foundations of an older church that was built in the 1200's and the south wall of the nave is largely from the original church. There might even be an even older church underneath.

Although the church is a ruin there is still an Easter service at 7.30 am.



In the graveyard, there is a big mound. This could be a Broch site.

### Interpretive Questions:

*How many grave stones are there in the graveyard?*

*What are the common names on the gravestones?*

*What is in the glass box?*

*What direction is the bell facing?*

*Can you find the 1674 date on one of the gravestones?*



**Reflective Questions:**

**The Kirk has two names.**

*If you could change your name, what would it be and why?*

*What does your name mean?*



**The stones on the arch are supporting one another and hold each other in place.**

*Who supports you and how do they support you?*

*Who do you support?*

### No. 3-Gill Pier

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**Gill Pier is a harbour for fishing boats.**



**It's outside the village and is next to the crab factory. It has always been a busy place. You can watch what is going on at the pier from a webcam. The daily boat from Westray to Papay stays there and it is also the mooring place for lots of fishing boats. Every year, in the summer, there is an annual regatta where people who love sailing race around some parts of the island.**

**There is a special type of boat in Westray, it is called a Westray Skiff**

#### Interpretive Questions:

*Can you count how many boats are at the pier?*

*Can tell if it is high tide or low tide?*

*Is the Marianna (the boat to Papay) at the Pier?*

*Can you name two of the fishing boats there?*

*Can you find out more about the skiffs?*

**Reflective Questions:**



*If you had a boat where would you sail to?*

*What would you name your boat and why?*

*If your school/organisation was a boat what type of boat would it be?*

*You need to steer your boat towards something. Where are you steering?*

*When do you hope to get there?*

## No. 4-Notland Castle

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**Notland Castle is a large ruined building.**



**It was built in the time of Mary Queen of Scots by Gilbert Balfour. It was hoped that she would escape to there but she never made it.**

**Balfour was executed for his involvement in the murder of Cardinal Beaton and Darnley.**

**It is a Z shaped castle with a fine hall and stairway. On the first floor is a room with secret compartments. There is a story that there was a secret passageway to a nearby cave.**

### Interpretive Questions:

*Does it have any form of a defence system?*

*How many gun loops are there?*

*Can you find a love heart carved in stone?*

*How many rooms are there in the castle?*

*What are the kitchens like?*

*How many bolts are on the door?*

**Reflective Questions:**

*What would you hide in a secret compartment?*

*Where would your secret passage lead to and why?*



**The castle has a strong defence.**

*What do you protect?*

*How do you defend yourself?*

*Who do you protect and why?*

*What do you do if people attack you?*

*How do you feel?*

## No. 5-Grobust

**Grobust Beach is one of Westray's best but beware of the sea!**



The sea is not safe to swim in because it has a strong current close to the shore. The sea is beautiful on a windy day, when the waves are crashing against the rocks. It's a perfect place to spend an afternoon with your family; you'll probably get the beach all to yourself. Just sit down, relax and let the children explore. You can also find seals or selkies at some times of the year.

### Interpretive Questions:

Look carefully at some of the rocks and you might find some fossils.

Westray's famous poet Robert Rendall was a conchologist, a shell specialist. I wonder if he gathered them here?

*"I walked a bygone summer day*

*The sandy links of a sea blown bay."*

**Robert Rendall**

*What Ocean can you see from Grobust?*

*Can you see any selkies? Find out about the Finn Folk and Selkies in Orkney folklore*

*How many different shells can you find?*

**Reflective Questions:**

**Selkies are said to be shape shifters.**

***If you could change into anything what would it be?***



**Choose a shell and put it in your pocket to remind you of someone special.**

***Who would that special person be?***

**Choose a stone for someone or something you don't like and throw it out into the ocean.**

**Write a message in the sand.**

***If you could find a message in a bottle in the sand where would it be from?***

## No.6-Noup Lighthouse



**Noup Head Lighthouse was built in 1898. The lighthouse was built by David Stevenson, a cousin of Robert Louis Stevenson who wrote “Treasure Island”. It was built to warn ships off the North Shoal.**

**The tower is 24m high and the light now flashes every 30 seconds. The light was automated in 1964 when a new lens was installed. Then in 2001, solar power replaced gas. There are 36 solar panels that provide the energy to keep the light blinking.**

### Interpretive Questions:

*How many different birds can you see?*

*How tall do you think the cliffs are?*

**The light is solar powered.**

*What environmentally friendly things do you do?*

*What do you think it would have been like to be a light house keeper here?*

**Reflective Questions:**



*Is there anyone that is guiding you on your journey?*

**The pattern of flashes identifies the light.**

*How are you identified?*

**The Stevensons were famous for lighthouses and “Treasure Island”.**

*What treasure would you like to find?*

*What would you do with the riches to make a difference?*

**If you have enjoyed your journey through our Metasaga and would like to explore another, here are the other schools involved.**

