

# INVESTIGATING THE ROMAN BATH-HOUSE

## EXCAVATING AND PRESERVING A ROMAN SITE FOR POSTERITY

### Introduction activity

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Discuss with the class how the Romans bathed in a very different way from how we do today. Explain that if they were rich the Roman family would have their own bathhouse attached to their property, but that if they could not afford this, they went to the public bathhouse.

Also explain that they didn't have baths or showers but instead had a series of rooms ranging from cold to warm to hot which they would move through. The hot room was where they would sweat off the oils, old skin and dirt using a strigil. Discuss how this is different to today's bathing methods.

### Main part of the lesson

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Watch the video clip entitled 'Learn about the house and baths, how the underfloor heating worked and what was used in the baths' and explain that this is the actual excavated remains of a home and bath-house from Roman London. An office block has been built over the Roman remains and the architects and engineers were very careful to preserve what had survived burial for nearly 2000 years.

Explain that this was the house of a wealthy Roman family and ask the pupils as they are watching to note down any evidence we have that shows that the family were wealthy. (The evidence is that the house was made of stone not wood, there was underfloor heating – the hypocaust; there was a separate heated bath-house for family use).

Ask pupils to imagine that they are one of the Victorian builders asked to clear the site for the building of the offices above. As they had no idea that these Roman remains were below, ask the pupils to write a descriptive account as if they were the one to dig and find the remains, describing how they felt, what they did on discovering the remains, and what happened once the remains were discovered.

### Plenary

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Share some of the descriptive writing from the main activity.

As a class, watch the video clip entitled 'See how some of the archaeological material is stored at the site and how it is grouped into different materials'. This clip shows the store room where some of the items excavated from the site are now stored.