

Background information about the project

Louis Pasteur and the Devastating Germs

This collaborative project, between Théâtre Sans Frontières and the Centre for Life, Newcastle upon Tyne and funded by the Wellcome Trust, explores the life and work of 19th century French chemist and microbiologist, Louis Pasteur.

Combining science with French language skills and drama, the project delivered day-long sessions for Year 8 and 9 pupils. The pilot project took place at the Centre for Life in June 2013 with teachers and pupils from four Northumberland and North Tyneside schools.

In the *Louis Pasteur* workshop, actors took on the roles of the eminent French scientist and the people who helped him make his scientific breakthroughs. Together, they portray the key moments in his life in a series of activities delivered in both French and English.

During his life, Pasteur came up with the process of pasteurisation, where bacteria are destroyed by heating beverages and then allowing them to cool. His work in germ theory also led him and his team to create vaccinations for anthrax, chicken cholera and rabies.

The day began with pupils meeting Louis Pasteur and British surgeon Joseph Lister at the Royal Society, London in 1892, the year of Pasteur's 70th birthday. The pupils took on the roles of 19th century characters from different backgrounds such as shepherds, silk worm farmers and surgeons who all have problems they hope Louis Pasteur can solve.

The pupils then spent some time in the science lab working on practical experiments. They replicated Pasteur's famous experiment with flasks to disprove the theory of spontaneous generation. Then the students carried out their own investigations into what microbes need to grow, translating their results into French to check their findings with Louis Pasteur.

Later, the pupils watched a scene where Pasteur meets brewery owner Georges Bigot and demonstrates the effects of pasteurisation.