

Prayer and reflection

Berlin Trip 8th-11th February 2018

Year 10 and 11 had a busy but exciting few days in Berlin in February. The trip focused on the Nazi Germany and Cold War aspects of the GCSE syllabus. Students were able to experience a whole range of activities relating to these including visiting the Checkpoint Charlie Museum, a Cold War walking tour including sections of the Berlin Wall and a visit to the East Side Gallery. Amongst the many other visits, students studied Nazi Germany through an excursion to a WWII air raid shelter, the Topography of Terror and Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp. For the majority of students this was their first visit to a concentration camp, a difficult but worthwhile experience.

Year 10 student Hannah Eriksson summed up her experience of this day:

“Before going there, I was expecting it to be tough and thought-provoking, and it definitely was, but it was more than that. The visit gave me a perspective I couldn’t have seen by just reading a textbook, because I was seeing – with my own eyes – one of the places people were sent to if they were in opposition or a threat to Hitler or the Nazis. In the textbooks it’s very matter-of-fact and you read the number printed stating how many people were sent to concentration camps, and although it does make you think, standing in one for myself, surrounded by the walls that confined the prisoners themselves, made me reflect in a different, much deeper and thoughtful way.

When I was there, I learnt about how the concentration camps functioned, not just that they existed, and I learnt so much about the terror and control the Nazis had. It was there where I realised just how much power and control the Nazis had, but also how seemingly ordinary and indifferent some of the people who went along with (and even supported) the Nazis ways were. Guards who worked there actually volunteered to be there, but, they also had their own families to feed as well. It highlighted to me that it wasn’t just Hitler and high-ranking Nazis involved in the persecution of minorities during Nazi rule; people considered normal and ordinary were also involved and part of it too. It was also a moment on the trip where I realised how truly horrific the conditions at concentration camps were. It made me truly grateful for what I have now, today, and what I have to look forward to, in the future.”