

Students soak up the art and culture during Half Term trip to Florence

Year 10 and 11 students enjoyed a fantastic 4 days in Florence over the February half term. The 39 lucky students who are all studying art, graphics or textiles GCSE spent 3 nights in the cultural-rich Italian city. They had a packed schedule that saw them explore several galleries as well as having time to soak up the fantastic architecture, sample some delicious Italian food and also fit in a little bit of shopping.

Arriving early evening on Monday 18th February the students had time to settle in to the hotel and partake in some nearby sightseeing at dusk before heading to dinner. The next day they visited the Galleria dell'Accademia which showcased classical art and sculpture including Michelangelo's magnificent statue of David, which was a highlight of the trip for many. They also toured the Uffizi Gallery in which they saw the works of artists including Botticelli, Caravaggio, Giotto, Michelangelo and Raphael. Students also enjoyed seeing the local sights such as the market and bustling squares. They also had the chance to sit and sketch the magnificent buildings, something which year 10 GCSE art student Mahiya Aquidass really enjoyed, 'being able to sit and draw from real live was really great and helped me become more confident at sketching.' It was Mahiya's first time in Italy and she really enjoyed the trip, 'it was an amazing time, it felt like another world, the architecture was beautiful, it was such a great opportunity.'

On the Wednesday morning the students took the bus a little further afield visiting the modern art gallery Centro Pecci. In the afternoon they took in some amazing 20th Century Italian art in the Museo Novecento. The weather was kind and the sun shone on all days making the experience of walking by the river admiring the architecture, eating outside and generally exploring the local culture all the more wonderful. GCSE graphics student Don Fei Qui enjoyed shopping and eating proper Italian pizza, but also observing the difference between the modern and classical art he saw. 'Being able to compare the differences between the modern and classical styles has really made me think about mixing ideas when working on my graphics projects, and the whole experience has given me lots of inspiration to extend my ideas.'

On both days the students took to their sketchbooks to record what they had seen before heading out to dinner. The trip serves as a way to inspire the year 11 students as they prepare for their final GCSE exam, using their sketchbooks to collect ideas and images that they want to explore further. The year 10 students have the opportunity to extend their current course work on portraits and also work on their current architecture project.

The students were fantastically behaved; with a teacher from another school commenting on their exceptional behaviour during dinner. Gail Christie, Director of design and technology said 'it is a fantastic experience for our students to be able to visit Florence, a City that can inspire them in their studies and really enhance their understanding of the work we do in the classroom.'

