

Would you like to come to York or Edinburgh too? Join our Q&A session on November 30th at 6 p.m. HS1

Teaching Placement in York and Edinburgh - September 2022



York

Introduction (Melanie Haider)

A group of 15 students, primary as well as secondary teacher trainees, was given the great opportunity to take part in a teaching placement in York. York is a small but very beautiful and historic city in the north of England. We were allocated to different schools in York: Clifton (years 2-8), St. Olave's (years 8-13) and St. Peter's (years 13-18). All these schools are part of the *public-school* St. Peter's (please note: this term refers to a "private school" in the Austrian sense!). The teaching placement took place from the 17th of September to the 1st of October 2022. We either stayed in a hotel near the school or with host families during the two weeks of our stay. After school and at weekends, we had plenty of time to explore the city centre and to visit neighbouring towns like Scarborough, Whitby, or Robin Hood's Bay.



Teaching placement at Clifton Nursery and Primary School (Laura Stockinger & Medina Sibic)

At Clifton Nursery and Primary School, we were welcomed with open arms by the teaching staff and students. The distinguished school's infrastructure impressed us immensely since it looks as if it was straight from a movie! Rugby pitches, two theatres, a swimming pool and a tennis court are only some outstanding examples that are part of the private school. No wonder St. Peter's is one of England's leading schools!

We were given the opportunity to join the primary students in the cafeteria for lunch every single day. On the first day of school, each of us were allocated to a different class. Several students received a timetable allowed us to see different classes each day. At Clifton, each year is assigned to a specific theme such as "space", "Greek Gods" and "forest". The classrooms were decorated by the students and class teachers with ingenious decorations such as a Greek gateway, drawings of astronauts and plants, which made the classes highly visually appealing. Subjects such as Maths, Arts, and English all connected to the class themes. During our time in the classes, we were particularly surprised by how knowledgeable and interested the students were. The pupils were remarkably open-minded and did not shy away from approaching us. They asked us to hold hands, open their water bottles, peel oranges and tell us stories about our lives. Our task in the classrooms was to assist the teachers in any way possible. This involved painting, calculating, reading and spelling with the students. In the second week, we introduced the students to Austrian culture and the German language. We, thus, held several lessons and prepared activities such as a quiz. For the quiz, the students were shown images of famous Austrian personalities such as Van der Bellen or Tom Turbo and they had to guess who or what is being portrayed (multiple/single choice quiz). For the post-card activity, the students had to imagine that they visit Austria and they then write about their imaginary trip to a friend. The challenge was to add at least one German or Austrian word to their texts, which all students mastered.

Throughout our two-week teaching placement at Clifton Primary School, we were treated so lovingly which made saying goodbye to the teaching staff as well as the pupils incredibly hard for us. We warmly recommend doing an internship at St. Peter's to everyone who is aspiring to become a teacher!



Teaching Placement at St. Olave's (8-13) (Sophie Kogler & Lukas Walter)

Some of us were allocated to St. Olave's, which is a part of St Peter's School. From the first day on, our teachers there made us feel like we had been there forever. They welcomed us so wholeheartedly and lovingly integrated us into their classes. Each of us joined a class of either the first or second form and remained with them in all their different subjects (and there were many). You would, for instance, join their English lessons, and just assist the teachers by helping the pupils when they struggle with writing a word or proof-read some of their sentences when they are unsure about them. You would also help them in Maths labelling number lines. Thus, we were really emerged in the language and got to know a great amount of new vocabulary - in the easiest but most meaningful way possible - by just doing it!

Field Trip (Lukas Huber)

On our second weekend, Markus organized a field trip to three cities (Whitby, Robin Hood's Bay, Scarborough) located at the seaside. Apart from that, we also visited the famous Goathland Station which can be seen in the Harry Potter movies. One highlight was definitely the group picture taken in Whitby under the jawbones of a blue whale. After we strolled through the city and visited some lovely souvenir shops, we went for lunch and, of course, ate fish and chips. Our third stop, Robin Hood's Bay, is known for the astounding coastline and we enjoyed walking along the beach for a little bit. In general, we had a very busy day and were able to explore and learn a lot about British culture and history.



Sights (Svenja Hons-Huebner)

York is a gold mine for history-interested students since there is so much to see from the Roman Bath Museum to the Jorvik Viking Centre and the old Old City Walls or the York Chocolate Story. The York Castle Museum lets you walk through the historic streets of York and discover the cells of the old prison. Do you dare to visit the York Dungeon? All these places offer a great opportunity to learn something about the History of York. But of course, that is not all. You can see some of the finest pieces of art in the York Art Gallery and try to draw your own masterpiece. The York Shambles is the best place to be for all Harry Potter lovers. While walking through the street that resembles Diagon Alley one can go window shopping and find some magical souvenirs. Besides all those great museums and historical places to visit, a place to find time to relax after classes might be the Museum Gardens where locals, as well as tourists, come to enjoy the park with the green fields, trees, ruins, and the remains of the St. Mary's Abbey. Park benches invite you to come and relax for a while and enjoy the beautiful view.



York History - Ghosts and Apparitions (Elisabeth Frank)

“We have to speak to at least one stranger a day!” – sounds weird, right? But this was the goal my best friend and I set ourselves not only for our holiday in Glasgow but in York as well. Traveling to a foreign country means wanting to get to know it from more than a student’s perspective for us. And it worked!

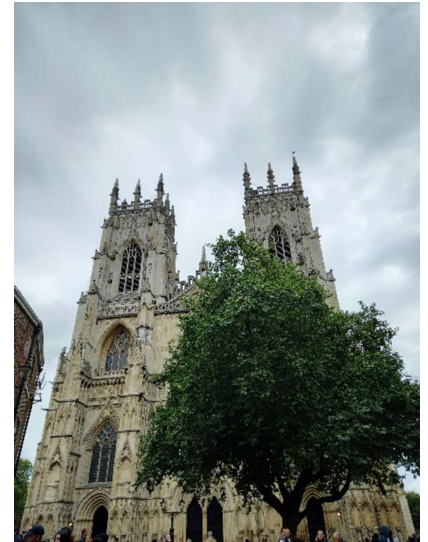
A student from Canada, an American backpacker, a Scottish bartender... the list of people we got to know just goes on and on. On our first night in York, after an arduous train ride, we went to a charming old pub, fittingly called the “Hole in the Wall”. We were seated next to two couples, obviously on holiday, and after dinner we began chatting to them. One of them, Adam, turns out was a York native and knew the city like the back of his hand.

“Do you like ghost stories?” he asked us and after we said yes, he turned his chair in our direction and began talking. I would like to share some of the stories he shared with us here, as I think it’s a perfect example what you can learn from someone who lives in York.

Did you know that York is the most haunted town in Europe? Every pub has their own house ghost – disembodied voices and spectres are part of the establishments just like the bar and the table and chairs. But people are not afraid of these ghosts. Even the people who report encounters with the supernatural do so in an almost... friendly

manner. The people of York are proud of their ghosts – they display plackets with their stories and are glad to tell you about them as soon as you ask.

The Minster, arguably one of the most famous sights of York, is haunted too. It is made of brittle stone and needs repairs constantly much like the churches we have in Austria. What makes the whole matter even more difficult is that the Minster is close to several train lines and the shaking and rumbling had begun to slowly destabilize the foundation of the Minster. In the 1970s it was given about 15 more years – after that the fragile building would begin to crumble and quickly collapse.



Not wanting their place of worship to be destroyed, the city of York found an innovative solution – the foundation would be carefully excavated and filled with concrete and steel beams, a hugely costly but necessary endeavour. Here is where we get back to ghosts: As the foundation was dug out, a group of workers swore blind that from the hole dug in the foundations they saw something amazing on the street outside. Clear as day, the legs of a battalion of roman soldiers passed by and then vanished as quickly as they had appeared. And really, after the archaeologists got to do some further digging, they found parts of an old roman road, a sight not uncommon in York. Ghosts can therefore not only scare us – they can be harbingers of ancient artifacts.

If you are interested in ghosts, you can also book one of the plenty ghost tours around the city. And if you are not, still do it: You might never get a more beautiful look at the gates and alleys of York at night, led by a knowledgeable local.

The Jorvik Viking Centre (Lea Adlung)

Did you know that during a small excavation in the 1970s archaeologists dug up about 40 000 items from the Viking era in York that were so significant that they forced a change in the national history curriculum?

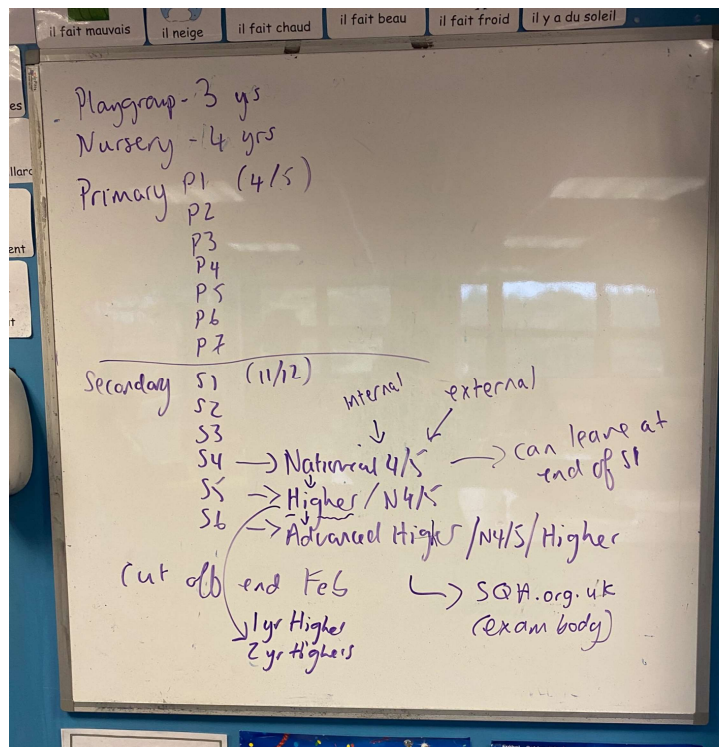
In 1984, the Jorvik Viking Centre opened its doors to the general public and it is still open today. Jorvik, by the way, is the name the Vikings used for the settlement in the area of modern York. Here you can experience the Viking era through a tour around a life-sized replica of an authentic village before you go on to explore an exhibition of the many artifacts found in excavations. The whole place is reminiscent of the Grottenbahn on Pöstlingberg, Linz, just educational and with far better funding.

Before you leave, we would also recommend you take a look around the gift shop and talk to one of the very knowledgeable staff members, who are, of course, all in authentic costumes.

Edinburgh

From September 17th to October 1st 2022, ten PHDL students, five primary and five secondary, stayed in Edinburgh for a teaching placement. Because our schools were all over Edinburgh, we stayed in different AirB&Bs and hostels. Most of us went to the schools by public transport and some could even walk to school. We had the opportunity to get an insight into local schools, as well as to observe and teach lessons.

The school system in Scotland is pretty different from Austria. The children visit playgroups as soon as they are three years old. Afterwards they go to nursery. Those two childcare institutions are usually not visited every day. They are considered help for parents. Additionally, young children have the opportunity to learn how to interact with other children their age. After nursery, the kids go to primary school. They usually start at 4,5 years old and they visit primary school for 7 years. Then they will continue to go to school until they are 18 years old. In the last three years of their school careers, they have to take their A-Levels which can be compared to the Austrian Matura. However, A-Levels are not



standardized and can vary in the different countries of the United Kingdom.

We were all allowed to visit different subjects and grades throughout the two weeks of our placement. Many of us had the opportunity to teach about Austria and our culture. Additionally, we were able to see many different teaching techniques and styles.

Primary:

The primary students were allowed to visit primary schools and be a part of some classes and see different types of teaching in different subjects. The Scottish lessons don't take

place in the classroom all the time, there are also lessons outside. The weather doesn't matter. In Scotland there are very open lessons and a positive mistake-culture.

Secondary:

Edinburgh is a very old city. This can be proven by having one of the oldest schools in all of Europe. Two of our students were able to visit the Royal Highschool of Scotland, which has existed since 1128. The city provides many different attractions such as going through the closes which were the main streets in medieval times. Additionally, the people in Edinburgh are very friendly and helpful. The city is perfect for anyone who loves history and royalty: one could go to Holyrood Palace or Edinburgh Castle where it is possible to see the royal jewels of Scotland.

The school system is very different compared to the one we have here in Austria. The first notable difference is that not the teachers move according to their timetable, in Scotland every teacher has their own classroom, which they are free to decorate however they want. It is also notable that the schools are arranged in departments, meaning we spent our time at the foreign language department, where the students could learn Spanish and French besides German.

Our day at the school would start at between 8 and 9am where we would meet the teachers in their office. During the lessons we were allowed to have various conversations with the pupils, our goal was mainly to get them to talk to us in German. The topic did not really matter, as long as they would stick to German or would ask German related questions. We were also allowed to take a look at Spanish and French classes. At around 2pm we were allowed to leave the school to go out and explore Edinburgh some more.

The
kept
and



teachers were really nice and always
an eye out for us. They took care of us
treated us as equal teachers.



Going out/field trips

On our only weekend we met up and went to North Berwick by bus. After a long drive we got off the bus and were amazed by the beautiful landscape. It was very sunny, but really windy. For the first time we really needed our bad-weather-clothes, even a hood. We were really

lucky with the weather, though, because it was really sunny all the time and in Austria the weather was really bad. We walked along the beach, were astonished about the beautiful shells and talked about our time in Edinburgh. After a nice meal we went back home to our flats.

Added to city sightseeing (see the list underneath with our traveling hints) we completed a lot of pub tours and we also went to a musical ("The book of Mormon"), that was really wonderful.

Two of us also participated in a 12-hour trip through the Highlands of Scotland. Being able to see the mountains as well as Loch Ness and old villages was an extraordinary experience.

You should visit (in Edinburgh):

- Calton Hill
- Arthur's Seat
- A castle (Maybe Edinburgh Castle or a smaller a cheaper one like Craigmillar Castle)
- St. Gilles Cathedral
- Mary Kings Close
- ...



Overall, we can all agree that these two weeks were amazing and helped us a lot in our growth and development as teachers. The insights we got were incredible and we were able to make new friends along the way. Every single one of us is really grateful for this

experience and we want to say thank you to all the people from the universities that made this extraordinary internship possible.

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