**Our teaching placement in York**

In September 2023, 32 students for primary and secondary education went on a teaching placement to York to broaden our horizons. We had a very special experience, meeting the locals and spending two weeks immersed in English culture. During our time in York, we got the opportunity to observe, teach, and assist in several schools: St. Peter’s with its attached facilities Clifton and Olave’s, Park Grove, Haxby Road Primary Academy, Robert Wilkinson Primary Academy, Hob Moor, and Lakeside Primary Academy. We got the chance to gain knowledge about York's history with the help of our pupils and learn about the British school system. Next to learning new teaching methods from the British teachers, we were also able to improve our spoken English while teaching. We encountered a lot through our experiences in York’s schools and our newfound knowledge will surely be of help in our future careers.

It was fascinating to see all the differences between the Austrian and the English school system. Even trivial things, such as solving math problems were handled differently in English primary schools, which was quite startling at the beginning. But with the help of the students and other teachers we were able to overcome those problems and assist as best as we could.

Thankfully, we had some leisure time as well, which we often spent in the city of York to see all the beautiful sights the old city has to offer. From a museum about the Vikings to a cat trail throughout the whole city, everyone was able to find something they were interested in. Especially the Harry Potter fans had a blast in the city, since The Shambles, a very old hidden street in York, looks a lot like the famous “Winkelgasse”. A sight that was not hidden at all was York Minster, probably the main attraction in York. In a Pub quiz, we actually learned that it’s possible to see the famous old church from all four corners of the city. And not to forget the delicious traditional food throughout the whole city of York, every restaurant had another specialty to offer.

On the weekend after the first week in York had already passed, we made a trip to Whitby and Robin Hood’s Bay, which was organised by Markus Wiesinger. On the way we stopped at the Goathland train station, which was used as a film set for the Harry Potter movies. From our coach we could even see a steam train passing by. Whitby was scenically beautiful, and it is no wonder that the story of Dracula was inspired by this place. The town additionally had a lot to offer in terms of cuisine, from fish and chips to sweet treats. After leaving Whitby we made our way to Robin Hood’s Bay. This beach on the North Sea coast owes its name to the illegal trade and smuggling that was carried out there in times gone by. Here we were able to take in the enchanting landscape and enjoy the sea breeze. After a long day with lots of beautiful impressions, we went back to York. In summary, the trip was very exciting and well organised.

Above all, we are grateful to have had these experiences and would like to thank the team at PHDL for making these placements possible. Especially a huge thank you to Markus Wiesinger and Marlene Bauer for the good organisation and for being there for us around the clock; as well as Edith Kreutner for being a much-needed support for the pub quiz. We also extend our gratitude to the hotel staff of the Hedley Hotel and are grateful for the host families, who have welcomed us warmly. And last but not least, thank you to all the principals and teachers at the schools who gave us a detailed insight into English school life. We were able to learn a lot for our role as teachers and have broadened our horizons towards the many cross-cultural opportunities this has made us aware of. We can highly recommend this teaching placement to future PHDL trainees.

