

Turing – a success story

Nathalie Paris

On 13th June 2022 started the best school trip I have ever been on: 18 Y5 & Y6 pupils alongside 3 members of staff from Roseberry Primary School in Pelton, County Durham, were kind enough to let me accompany them on their trip to France!

And what a brilliant week we had!!

I had been confident that our pupils would enjoy being in France, but I had underestimated how much French they would want to know and speak! Being with French children their own age is what made the trip. Everyone on both sides got so much out of it!

The Monday was spent travelling but went a lot quicker than we thought it would. Once in Calais, our accommodation was less than 2 hours away, which was just perfect. We stayed at the youth hostel in Eu, Normandy, whilst our partner school was in Béthencourt-sur-Mer, in Picardy, so basically we were on the north-eastern coast of France.

On the Tuesday, we were supposed to be at our partner school for 8.30am – we did not quite make it as we were tired from our journey, but we were there for 9am. We could not have asked for a better welcome from them. As one of our pupils wrote: *“My favourite part of the France trip was meeting the French children because they were so polite and so welcoming”*.

We made 2 groups: each had half of our children in it, and half of the French children of similar ages. One group spent the morning with the French teachers and the other with the visiting teachers from England (we had obviously prepared activities for this); then we swapped for the afternoon. This was a brilliant idea, because the children had to work together and friendships were already made by lunchtime!

We all enjoyed our long lunch break (2 hours!). We had a picnic but also got to see what the children were having in the canteen. Most of them went home for their lunch and our pupils were looking forward to seeing them again for the afternoon which also went smoothly.

Wednesday is a day off for French children, so we went out for a day trip by ourselves: we headed for Albert where we visited their WWI museum, and then went on a tour of important war sites. We even walked in trenches! One of our pupils wrote: *“My favourite part of France was when we went to the museum (WWI).”*

On Thursday we headed back to the school and followed a coach full of French pupils to Saint-Valéry-sur-Somme where we separated into small groups and set off in different directions for a 7-mile walk– with maps! The weather had been sunny and warm, but the temperatures that day were in the high 20s, so it was hard work! Luckily, we went on a steam train ride for a rest after our picnic, and had an ice cream before we got back on the coach. Our driver, who was amazing, then took us to the beach (a pebble one) where we had a refreshing paddle!

However, it would not be a proper trip if we had not needed a visit to A&E, would it? One of our children fell down the stairs and bumped his head that evening. Thankfully, he was absolutely fine, and we were literally in and out of A&E after being reassured and given instructions to wake him up every other hour that night. Some of us did not get much sleep as a result!

Friday is market day in Eu – I went out early and prepared a Treasure Hunt around the market for the children to do in small groups, accompanied by an adult. It ended in the boulangerie where everyone ordered a pastry of their choosing!

We were back in school to eat our packed lunch and spend a last afternoon with our friends. They had borrowed lots of traditional games from the area that we could try, and everyone just played. We had a “goûter” at 4pm: croissants, pains au chocolat and chouquettes. How spoilt were we?

To finish off and in front of parents, the French children sang some songs in English for us, and we sang 2 songs in French that they joined in with. The time to say goodbye came round too quickly... A pupil wrote: *“I would like to come back to France because I loved meeting French children (I even cried when we had to leave).”*

We were also sad to leave our cosy accommodation on the Saturday morning, but we enjoyed visiting the cathedral and doing some shopping in Amiens. By then it was 35 degrees... We even had a French MacDonald’s and met up with my mum there – she joined us for a ride on the carousel!

On the way back, we got an earlier ferry, so we were home in the middle of the night... tired, but so happy with our time away!

Thanks to Turing funding, the cost to the children for this trip was... £0! All they needed was a little pocket money for the journey in England and for souvenirs in France.

I must in particular thank E. Hall, because she is the one who put the funding application together, and Brian Stobie, from International Durham, for encouraging her to do it and supporting her with it. The children were fabulous, the staff made it easy and I am so thankful for the experience which I would highly recommend. Same again next year?!

PS Our school mascot, Nounours, also had a grand time, as you can see. The children were in charge of the teddy and my digital camera... they took 481 photos! We are only sharing a selection of them with you! 😊

Nounours helped to make a French flag, then a Union Jack.

https://1drv.ms/u/s!AliNsQPOEQM_i8FSZLmJhtUbwtQXqQ?e=rXtEmI

Nounours helped the steam train drivers.

https://1drv.ms/u/s!AliNsQPOEQM_i8Abss1lp74_bKvITw?e=v17zTR

Nounours loves climbing trees!

https://1drv.ms/u/s!AliNsQPOEQM_i8EK4_y0mDKhgWqNXA?e=vdTEEQ

Nounours was trying to keep cool... with his hat on!

https://1drv.ms/u/s!AliNsQPOEQM_i8A8Qzi-QOus8dtwiA?e=jmmYf1

Nounours at the mine crater of Lochnagar in La Boisselle.

https://1drv.ms/u/s!AliNsQPOEQM_i7AWruGZ0Ndf7SoW0Q?e=JiXJG8

The croissants, pains au chocolat & chouquettes.

https://1drv.ms/u/s!AliNsQPOEQM_i7B21aUWu8MIGOXNxX?e=Gdc13c