

Years five and six school trip to London, Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2019.

People present:

Mrs C Matthewmen - Head Teacher

Mrs J MacInnes - Teacher

Mr C Marmont – Parent Governor

12 pupils from years five and six

An early start was required in order for all of us to meet at Darlington train station at six thirty in the morning to catch the 07:03hrs to London, Kings Cross. Twelve very excited pupils certainly ensured that weary eyes were kept open! Fortunately, the train was quiet and the pupils were quick to gather in to their own groups and sit around the tables at a suitable distance from the adults accompanying them! Only a few reminders were required to calm their excited voices down.

Two and a half hours later we arrived and quickly made our way to the underground. I ensured the pupils that at all times I would be at the back to make sure that we always stayed together, not an easy task given the day to day chaos of moving amongst thousands of busy Londoners. We managed the underground journey and once off the tube it was a quick walk through crowded streets to our destination.



We were met at the education building of the Houses by Chris our tour guide and after a strict set of do's and don'ts and a security check we began the tour. The building itself was a wonderful statement of architecture and craftsmanship with huge ceilings, stained glassed windows and carved masonry. We walked through the meeting chambers where MPs, Lords and Ladies gather prior to

entering either the Houses of Commons or Houses of Lords. It was then a climb up the winding stairs to the public gallery of the Commons where we briefly watched a small debate overseen by the speaker slumped in his big green chair! We were then taken to the Great Westminster Hall which was undergoing a huge renovation process. A few pictures were allowed before we returned to the education centre.



In here we spent the next two hours discussing and participating in a workshop about why and how we campaign to get ourselves heard. By the time we finished it was clear that many of us were ready to eat, and so to lunch in the Victoria Gardens where the pupils and adults quickly polished off their lunches and explored the surrounding area.





With lunch over, it was then a stroll over Westminster Bridge and down to the Thames to embark on a river cruise. The walk down was crowded with Londoners and tourists alike and the pupils seem fascinated and excited to mingle among them all. The cruise itself was great helped by glorious sunshine and a warm breeze, plus a very amusing and knowledgeable tour guide. Many pictures taken by all before we turned around at London's most famous of bridges, the Tower Bridge.



While we waited for our time slot to board the London Eye we indulged in a well earned ice cream and the pupils let off some steam in the nearby Jubilee play area. A couple of pupils were a little nervous about boarding the Eye and a few words of encouragement were exchanged amongst us all. They needn't have worried as once they were in they really enjoyed it. Clear skies gave fascinating views over all of London and it was great to see how much they were all enjoying it.



Once we disembarked the Eye, it was then a march back over Thames and ahead towards Trafalgar Square via a quick glance at a surprisingly quiet Downing Street. Interesting to note how many photos were being taken by the pupils of the various war memorials along the way.

With pupils still all seeming happy and enthusiastic we spent twenty minutes relaxing and playing about in the fountains under the watchful eye of of Admiral Horatio Nelson.



With time starting to run short it was then a quick dash up to lively Leicester Square to catch some street performers in action although busy crowds meant it was hard for pupils to see what was happening. We then descended back into the underground to catch a tube train back to Kings Cross, a task made much harder as it was now rush hour. A credit to the pupils that despite the hustle and bustle they just seemed to take it all in their stride.



Tired and hungry symptoms were becoming more evident so we shopped for some bites to eat on the train. The train was very busy but the children settled down and munched their way through the rest of their food. Other passengers commented on the excellent behaviour of our pupils and asked the children from which school they had come.

Finally at 22.00hrs we arrived back at Darlington station to be met by parents who also seem relieved to see twelve happy but weary pupils back home.

To conclude from also a very weary governor, the day was fantastic. I cannot say how proud I was to represent Bowes Hutchinson's School. The pupils all behaved with a maturity and a responsibility much beyond their years; when tired or anxious moments cropped up, they all supported each other. They showed interest, they listened, they asked questions. They showed why we have an Ofsted outstanding grade. All the staff are a huge credit to the school and the pupils are just amazing.