



Our group in front of Buckingham Palace

England Exchange to London Sidcup

Schillerschule organized an exchange with Chislehurst & Sidcup Grammar School, which is in the south of London. We were 12 students from grade 8. We had English students from year nine and ten, which corresponds to grade 8 and 9 in Germany. First they came to Germany for five days in March and last week we visited them in London Sidcup.

Our English teacher Mrs Naruisch was

able to facilitate the exchange, because she knows Mrs Stolt, the German teacher in London, from her studies. Our trip to London was from Wednesday morning until Saturday evening.

School

Going to school in Britain is exciting for a German student, because a lot of different subjects are taught there and everyday life in a Grammar school is different from a German school day. It was very confusing for me that all students in Britain have to wear a uniform. Getting a permission to go to grammar school is very difficult. You have to write a qualifying examination, but when you get in you can't flunk out of school. In grammar school the students come to the classrooms of the teachers, not the other way round.

The Grammar School is next to the train station Sidcup and you can reach the school through an access road. The schoolyard contains many different buildings, one for Arts, one main tract with the library, cafeteria and classrooms, one for the older students.



Chislehurst & Sidcup Grammar School

First, all guests who want to enter the school have to sign in at a reception. After we had gone into our classroom for listening to the head teacher's 15-minute announcement, we went to the first lesson. In my case it was drama, a subject we don't have in Germany. So it was quite interesting for me. The lesson was in a small hall with a stage at ground level. The teacher was

quite special, she looked more like an actor on stage than a real teacher. But I was happy that I could understand her. The students prepared their written exam. They had to know how to use their physical and vocal skills for the play. After one hour we had to change the room. We went to the room of the English teacher. I could sit next to my exchange student. He could explain to me what they were doing, because it was really hard for me to understand. They compared three different sources (a newspaper article, a report and a facebook post). After the first two lessons the students had a 15-minute break. They talked each other and some of them bought sandwiches at the cafeteria.

The next lesson was Religion. We had a supply teacher, who didn't really care about us. The students had to do a work sheet, but instead of that the students talked with us. We changed the room to the craft room. There the students had to improve their design of a wooden shelf they wanted to construct. It was pretty interesting, because that subject was new for me and fascinating. Afterwards we had lunch break. The students waited for their lunch in a queue, the teachers controlled their behavior at the counter. You can eat a hot menu or you can select a sandwich or other snacks. When you pay, you have to put your finger on a device and the charge works automatically. The parents get to know what you eat by mail. After a yummy, my exchange partner wrote a science exam, so that I couldn't stay with him. Another German student and I spent the time with Mrs Stolt. She told us about the school and the difference to a normal German school. That was the first school day.

The program after school

After school we had the chance get to know London. On **Thursday** we went to the city centre by train. We walked a few minutes and then we could see London Eye, the famous big wheel next to the Houses of Parliament. The London Eye is the highest big wheel in Europe (135m high).It was very spectacular for me. But first we made a boat trip. The view from a boat is very different from the view from the ground. We passed Big Ben, the Houses of Parliament, Shakespeare's Globe and London Eye. Unfortunately, the weather was very ugly. It was rainy and very windy at the river so that you couldn't take nice pictures. We arrived at London Eye, we queued up and then the tour started. It got higher and higher and on the top you have the chance to see how big London is. When you look around you can't see any end. After the 30-minute tour on the London Eye we went back to Sidcup.

On **Friday** we walked around. Our tour started at Charing Cross. After a few minutes' walk, we arrived at Trafalgar Square and saw the National Gallery. The building is a very impressive building from the 19th century. We looked around for a few minutes, then we strolled to Leicester Square. There we had a few minutes free time in order to look around. We watched a street performer who made jokes. We also visited the M&M world. There you can buy a lot of different and expensive fan

articles.



When we went to Piccadilly Circus, we also saw Chinatown, which wasn't very big, so it wasn't interesting. After

that, we went to Buckingham Palace, which is the



palace of the Queen. It was crowded, although the square in the front of the palace was very wide. The weather was very sunny, so we took a lot of pictures. Then we walked down The Mall. This street goes from Buckingham Palace to the Admiralty Arch. It is very impressive to see this 1 km long avenue, which is dead straight, with these big Union Jacks (the British flag). When you get to the end you can see Buckingham Palace from far away and between you and the palace is this big avenue. Afterwards we went to the train station and drove back to Sidcup.

On **Saturday** we didn't have a program, so that we made our own. My exchange student and I went with two other students to Greenwich. When we walked up the hill, we had a nice view over the suburbs of London. We discovered the O₂ Arena and the rope way next to it. When we arrived, we bought tickets for the museum and the space show in the observatory. This show was in 3D. It was very spectacular. After that we went to the museum. There you can see a camera obscura, which is a small and dark house with only one room. On the roof are mirrors, which project the house of the Queen on a white table inside. Later we went down the hill and ate some fish and chips in a



restaurant. That tasted very good. Next, we visited the O₂ Arena we had already seen. It is a huge arena and we went up to the top. That was a great experience. After this, we took the big rope way to the docklands. The rope way was higher than 100m. The big drop-structures look like skyscrapers. Afterwards we wanted to visit a museum about the future at the docklands, but then we found out that you can't go in without an adult. So we couldn't go in. But then we went by the DLR, a driverless train, to Tower Bridge.

We crossed the bridge, which was very crowded. When we were on the other side of the River Thames, the bridge opened for a boat. That was very amazing to see how such an old bridge opened. What brilliant 19th century engineering. After that we went back to Sidcup.

Family

My exchange student lived with his parents and two younger siblings (6 and 4 years old). His family lived about 1 mile from the school. Typical for the neighborhood were twin houses, which always looked the same. On the ground floor they had a kitchen, a dining room, a living room and a study. Upstairs were the bedrooms. I was allowed to stay in the room of my exchange student's little brother. The father came back from work at about 6 o'clock. He sat with the younger siblings when they ate dinner. The other members of the family ate when they were hungry, so I ate with my exchange student. The meals were similar to ours in Germany (pizza, pasta, barbecue), but they ate more corn and different sausages. The stereotype, that the English always drink tea, is true. They drink tea for breakfast, in the afternoon and for dinner. We spent the evenings together, talking and watching TV in the dining room with the whole family. For breakfast we had cornflakes. The family was very nice to me and cared a lot about me.

All in all, the exchange was a wonderful experience because we got many new impressions, but for improving my English a lot it was too short.

Simon J., 22/5/2015