

Our Exchange to Poland.

Ten students and three staff members went on a ten day visit to Łódź in Poland during the Summer half term. We have a link school there called Zespol 7 School.

The staff and students from Zespol 7 visited St Mary's College in March of this year.

The Polish school was very different to our school in that it has only about 300 students aged from 13 to 18, it had fewer facilities and students did not have to wear a uniform. Like St Mary's it has a team of very dedicated teaching staff and its students are striving to do well and achieve.

We received a warm welcome from our partners. Students and teachers alike were warmly welcomed into the homes of our host families. We spent two days in school observing lessons and learning traditional Polish dancing like the Polonez.

June 1st in Poland is Children's Day. So the school had no lessons that day. They usually play sports outside on this day but because of the wet weather we did aerobics in the gym and Mr Norton shared our school specialism and taught them how to play cricket!

In the afternoon they lit a bonfire in the school grounds on which we roasted kielbasa (Polish sausage) on the end of long sticks.

We also ate delicious home baked cakes made by the Polish students and their mothers.

We had several outings. We visited the zoo and the botanic gardens which were near the school.

We went to Łowic an hours drive from Łódź where we witnessed the Blessed Sacrament Procession for Corpus Christi. Many of the local people put on colourful traditional dress for this occasion.

We spent a morning in the Jewish Ghetto-an area occupied by the Jews during World War II. We learnt of the terrible suffering of Jewish and Polish people in Łódź during that time. We visited the Palmarium, a palace that one of the 19th century factory owners had built for his family to live in.



We also visited Manufactura, one of the huge textile factories which is now a huge leisure and smart shopping complex.



Some of the children went to Aqua park which is Big and modern swimming pool with many swimming facilities.

The night before we left we went to see Romeo and Juliet ballet in the Great Theatre, which we all enjoyed very much.

On our last day the school put on a closing ceremony attended by the Comenius Co-ordinator for Poland, dignitaries from the Local Authority as well as Head Teachers from other schools in the area.

We were able to show off our newly learned Polish dancing, Mr Norton gave a short presentation in Polish about Mathematics, and our Polish partners performed English songs and a version of Alice in Wonderland. This was a fitting end to a hugely enjoyable visit.

