

Bonjour!



IN MARCH about 49 French students came to Swindon to witness the lifestyle and cultures of the common English way.

I was lucky enough to have the experience for one of those students to stay with me for a week! Her name was Elia Pujol- Loepe (pictured left). She is 14 years old and crazy just like me! As soon as she stepped through the door into my mad house, we clicked as if we had known each other since we were young. Yes, it was quite hard to communicate at first, with the help of all the sign language, the French translator and a few games of charades we managed!

What I found quite funny at first was how the French people greeted each other! The common English person would say hi or hello, and exchange a glance and that would be it. The French people would wave and come running up to each other and give each other a kiss on each cheek. Whether it was a boy or a girl it would happen each time they met each other but only once in a day.

Looking back on the week now it seems so short and so enjoyable, the week just flew by. One of the things that Elia and I did enjoy was going to London and having a laugh watching all the acts in Covent Garden and especially shopping!!! Elia also loved Hamleys and having a first ride in an English taxi. Now a taxi may not seem so amazing to us, but London is quite renowned for their taxis and busy lifestyle.

I do miss Elia so much! But I know that in June I am lucky enough to go over to France and experience their lifestyle for one week. I just cannot wait. This amazing experience was all thanks to The Commonweal School who have a connection with the French school in Perigeux.

• By Bethan Hire, 13, Commonweal

En classe

THE pupils at St Catherine's School, Stratton St Margaret, Swindon from Reception to Year 6 have been learning French every Monday, taught by Madame Small.

We investigated how parents, pupils and teachers feel about learning a new language.

At St Catherine's, Madame Small helps the pupils to learn French in a fun, easy way using everyday objects such as: items in a pencil case; places in a village called Petit Pont and a simple way to learn their numbers. Headteacher, Mrs Martin, said, 'The children always look like they are having fun!' Also, parents of the pupils claim that it's a good opportunity for their children to be learning a completely new language. Jordan-Amy, aged 9, believes 'it is great to learn a new language!' Most other pupils agree with her.

Many parents told us that their child/ren come home and randomly start speaking French and making French conversations with friends and family.

Lots of children say that they would love to continue learning French as they think Madame Small makes it a lot of fun.

• By Claudia Goddard, Kye Robinson, Elliot Skittrall and Ilena McCann, St Catherine's Primary

Pupils read between the lines



ON Tuesday 31st March Peatmoor Primary School held their termly reading incentive.

This encouraged children from Reception to Year 6 to read four times a week for ten weeks.

The reward for reading was a workout on a bouncy castle.

Over 175 children took part on the bouncy slide and had a fantastic time!

Daniel in Year 1 said: 'I was very excited about having a go on the slide.'

Jack in Year 2 said: 'I had lots of fun and would love to do it again!' The children had a great time and many hope that they will be able to do it again soon.'

Mr Watermeyer, the Y6 teacher, felt that the incentive was a great idea in encouraging children to develop an independence and love of reading.

• By Callum V, Peatmoor Primary

TESTING TIMES



NOW, do not worry. In the following article I will not become so unbearingly sentimental that you turn the page in frustration.

And in no way will I pretend that things aren't bad.

I can empathise fully with those who have lost their jobs, and are glad that, being a student, I don't have that latent anxiety hanging over my head.

Being a student however, does mean that I have exams. And I don't care what the recent newspaper reports have claimed; please believe me when I say that they are hard. Getting A's and A's is in no way easy, and I get the ominous inkling that students are starting to become pawns in a political game of chess.

Moan over, I will talk about something everyone experiences: the stresses and strains of everyday life. Yes there's a recession, and yes young people have exams to worry about.

But everyday when I go to school, I do at least try to see the funny side of the mundane. If I do badly in a test, I try to shrug it off and tell myself that I'll do better next

time.

Because let's face it, if you never laugh and are constantly miserable, and stressed, and frustrated; the weights and burdens of life are just going to drag you down. Life, after all, is made for living.

Think about this, you could have a PhD in astrophysics from Oxford University and earn upwards of £150,000 a year, but does that serve any purpose if you aren't contented and happy. I think not.

I have to admit however, that I don't always practise what I preach.

It can seem at times that all there is to life is academics and test scores and grades; and I would be willing to bet that many of my peers feel the same way.

At these times, I always make sure that I have an hour or so to just relax.

So, the next time your feeling a bit down, make a cup of tea, watch the repeats of That Mitchell and Webb Look on Dave, and have a good old chuckle.

• By Oliver Hillier, 15, The Ridgeway School

The debate

TESTS seem to be the thing everyone worries about.

We've decided to look into why people worry and find out more.

We investigated tests since SATs tests are fast approaching for Yr2 and Yr6. The school is obliged to give a range of tests around May time such as Literacy and Maths.

'Tests are alright but sitting through them is a bit boring though,' commented Sarah Hardy (Yr6).

'Children above 6 years old should get level 2 tests,' thinks reporter Jack W.

Parents have a lot of different views. A few are in favour of the tests but then again a few are against.

The parent of Rachel and Joshua Delahay claims that, 'if my child was unable to do well in a test I would want the test to be put a level down'.

Some parents have a completely different opinion though. 'Literacy and Maths tests are good to review what children have done,' Mrs John believes.

Mrs Martin, the head teacher doesn't like tests but doesn't dislike them either. She thinks that they can be a help sometimes to the teachers so that they know what the children need to learn next.

We believe that most teachers feel the same way. However Mrs Martin also says that 'I don't really like giving tests because they can make some children nervous'. What do you think about tests? Are they good or bad?

To test or not to test? The debate continues!

• By St Catherine's Primary