

Report on visit to Wolomin –Poland.

Aims: The sharing of knowledge and experience through observing Polish education system; evaluating our own practices; visiting local library; planning activities and forming professional relationships which will develop into lifelong friendships.

During the week of 5th-9th December 2010, the 'Art of Reading – Power of Creativity' Comenius Project teams visited Wolomin, Poland.

From our visits to both the school, Szkoła Podstawowa nr 7 and the Kindergarten no 5 in Wolomin we were able to learn and experience much of the Polish education system. Observing the children and teachers allowed us to make comparisons and share differences. It encouraged us to discuss as a group the similarities and differences between our education systems in our home countries. The initial school presentation was wonderful and made the whole Comenius group feel welcomed and valued. Visiting the pupils in their classes allowed us to see some of their work. We could see wall displays and classroom layouts.

Our visits to the numerous Polish Libraries helped us to gain an insight into the way they were run and used both in schools and in the community. We were able to look at the layouts and design of the buildings as well as gain display ideas that would help to encourage readers.

We visited many museums and learnt about some of Polands most creative people including; Adam Mickiewicz - poet, Fryderic Chopin - composer, ZOfia Nalkowska - writer who lived in Wolomin, Waclaw Nalkowski - geographer who lived in Wolomin. These visits were both informative and inspiring.

Our own presentations gave us new and in-depth knowledge about each of the countries schools and allowed us to describe our own. Again it was a time to reflect on similarities and differences and also celebrate successes.

From the mealtimes, especially at the home of the families of the teachers, we were able to gain insight into the culture and family life of people in Wolomin. It was very special to share food and stories.

The whole group was both enthusiastic and supportive throughout the trip. People made huge efforts to talk to everyone and not just the people from their home countries. After the 5 days we left feeling that we were not just colleagues but very good friends.

Results of the trip: Setting up of Comenius corners and displays; adding to e-twinning web site; using the e-twinning web site to share resources and experiences; continuing the pen pals; planning for the trip to Turkey; using the ideas gained from the trip to improve own libraries in our schools.