



Cyngor Cyllido Addysg  
Uwch Cymru  
Higher Education Funding  
Council for Wales



Name: Alexis Dabee

Destination: Florence, Italy

Placement: Kindergarten Firenze

Dates: September 2011 – December 2011

Through all my previous travel experiences, I had never been to Italy and thought why shouldn't I apply for the Leonardo Programme? This would give me the chance to see another country, learn about another culture, pick up another language and see where this experience would lead me...

When I arrived in North Wales I met the group of girls who would be coming to Italy with me. My time here was amazing, we had fun and it was a great opportunity to get to know everyone. The girls were easy going and we all got on straight away. Not long after our arrival did we start our language course.



The language lessons were intense but enjoyable and set at a great pace for us all as we were all beginners. Our tutor was approachable and made the lessons fun.

The week flew by and soon we found ourselves on unfamiliar territory...

When we arrived in Italy, we were lucky to have our tutor with us to sort out transport and help us get to our accommodation. I happened to be staying with two other girls from my party and this made us settle into our new accommodation easily. The apartment was beautiful and within walking distance to the language school where we studied for 3 weeks. We took this opportunity through our language lessons to explore the stunning city of Florence, the sights were amazing with plenty to do and lots to learn about the Italian culture.



As I am a trained teacher, I requested to work with children. I opted for this placement for two reasons. Firstly, it linked to my working background in the UK, so I knew how to create a caring environment for children. Secondly, working with young children who were learning the Italian

language would benefit me greatly as we would be able to help each other with the Italian/English language.

The host organisation found me the perfect Kindergarten school, 10 minutes away from my accommodation. The school was brilliant! My activities and tasks carried out included:

Helping and supporting the two Kindergarten teachers in class daily, by helping the children with their drawings after listening to stories. Helping the children in the bathroom. Helping with lunch time and snacks throughout the day. Encouraging development while they played in the gardens. Helping to participate and organise their school nativity play.

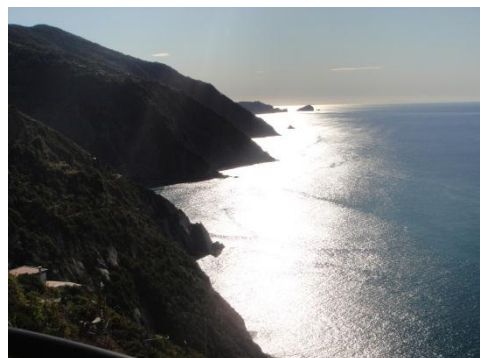


This was an amazing experience to see the variation in culture between the UK and Italy.

I was given clear instructions to complete tasks from all members of staff at my work placement. If I was unsure I would check what was required before starting any activity to ensure tasks were being carried out correctly. The staff were always supportive in trying to develop my language skills and encouraged me daily.

My social skills in class were quite high and I respected the time and effort the teachers input to create a good experience at my placement. I was always positive in my approach to asking for help and enjoyed helping any member of staff. I believe I worked well with the children and built a strong rapport with them. My language with the children improved whilst on placement and I enjoyed working in the school every day.

Whenever I had any spare time or a free weekend, a few of us would explore Italy further and go to Siena, Verona, Venice, Rome, Cinque Terre, Lake Garda, the list goes on... This was an amazing opportunity to look in awe at the amazing sights around Italy. There were only 2 flaws about the experience, firstly, was the landlady's change of heart regarding us staying in her apartment, where we were asked to leave without any reason or cause. Secondly, were the numerous fines you could obtain on the public transport if you were uncertain of how to purchase and use tickets.



Apart from these two "hiccups" the experience on the whole was enjoyable and advantageous for my return to the UK. All the skills and experiences obtained from Italy have already benefited me in the short space of time as I have recently taken up a teaching post. I have continued learning the Italian language and have set more sights for the future to travel again for my teaching career.