

Erasmus+ in conjunction with The British Council: 'The Better Together Project' 2018-2020.

Ballard School, New Milton, UK and ITC Cattaneo, San Miniato, Pisa, Italy.

Our journey so far...

In the summer of 2018 we learnt that our project proposal had been successful and that we were one of only 200 schools throughout the UK to have secured an Erasmus+ bid! Erasmus+ centres on social and educational mobility and the promotion of tolerance and diversity on an international platform.

The project's full title is **Better Together: the re-branding of old age..** The core theme of the project is to bring together young and old people in communities to encourage more social interaction and a sense of greater citizenship.

Once the celebrations were over, it was time to take the first steps forward with the Project...

Autumn 2018 saw recruitment of our Erasmus+ student team with presentations in assembly and PSHE time. Y9 students were invited to submit a letter of suitability to gain a place on the EU funded initiative. After some deliberation, 11 students were selected to take part in the Project and we began making links with our partner school in Italy, ITC, a college based in the lovely Tuscan hilltop town of San Miniato, close to Pisa.

Spring 2019 rolled around very quickly and Ballard students eagerly awaited their exchange trip to Tuscany from February 4th to the 8th. The exchange was a marvellous success with transnational activities and project activities moved on. It was a packed itinerary with highlights including: an activity-based visit to a local care home to conduct questionnaires and to interview the residents; a trip to the town's war museum and a poignant audience with a local veteran; a presentation and taste-testing on Tuscany's very own 'Slow Food' movement; a mesmerising trip back in time at the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence, along with treasure hunts and a visit to the heart of civic pride at their Town Hall. Tears and hugs marked the end of a wonderful warm, welcoming and productive week in the Tuscan sunshine as Ballard students waved goodbye to the rest of their Italian Erasmus counterparts: friendships forged and memories made.

Spring 2019 And barely had we time to unpack and count up our spare Euros, when our Italian partner school arrived for Ballard's reciprocal hosting week from March 11-15th. Despite the notoriously unpredictable English spring weather, we had an excellent week of activities and Project work with many highlights. For example: the inaugural meeting of the Silver Surfers Digital Club which saw the auditing of IT skills and young training old! Other in-school activities included working on Give it back and Pay-it –forward civic passports and a fun-filled taste of Britain cookery session. Our Q&A session with New Milton's mayor and members of New Milton Town Council to discuss the similarities between New Milton and San Miniato and to consider the future of our partnership offered a chance to cement ties and for our visitors to gain greater insight into our area. We also experienced a very successful trip to a local care home where young interacted with old to record stories and make new connections for the future. Squeezing in a trip to London, to the

National Gallery to observe inspirational masterpieces of art down the centuries as well as a visit to the Hard Rock café to listen to iconic music through the ages- brought to a close a very busy week!