

No year of Reach trips abroad would be complete without a visit to Turkey! This year we visited Istanbul for a week to talk to students and teachers there about Reach.

After landing on a sunny Saturday afternoon in February the week was poised for a series of visits around both the European and Asian sides of the bustling capital. The first school visit over in Üsküdar went well, until without warning, the skies darkened and we were caught in the middle of a spectacular snowstorm. By the end of the day the entire city was covered in a gigantic blanket of snow. Needless to say this was received with delight from school pupils, many of whom then had the next few days off for “study leave” which mostly involved snowball fights.

The bad news for us was that we had to rearrange the next few days of visits, although every cloud has a silver lining, which in this case was an unplanned visit to the beautiful Hagia Sophia and Blue Mosque. Despite the suddenness of the weather change things did not slow down in Istanbul, and the millions of cars on the roads and pedestrians on the street meant that things kept moving at a fast (if chillier) pace.

Towards the end of the week visits resumed as normal and we received a warm welcome from all the different teachers and pupils we met while zigzagging across Istanbul, fuelled by delicious Turkish food and coffee. A final weekend in the capital allowed some more time to take in the sights, including a visit to the Galata tower, Basilica Cistern, and countless restaurants and cafés. Having handed out tens of Reach brochures we refilled our bags with Turkish delight and coffee before moving on to Jordan, and the next stage of visits on the Reach Cambridge world tour.

A big thank you to everyone we visited in Turkey for their hospitality and help during our trip to the winter wonderland of Istanbul!

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