

No trip to England would be complete without a visit to London, and today we combined history, culture and sightseeing into our visit.

First up was the Churchill War Rooms, the hidden underground bunker where Prime Minister Winston Churchill led the war effort in World War Two. It was amazing to see the rooms recreated as they would have been - from the vitally important Map Room to the Cabinet Room where members of the government met, and from the shared dormitories for staff to the private bedrooms of the prime minister, military officers and ministers. It was amazing to see how the site remained secret during the war, with staff taking note of a sign that was changed each day to indicate what the weather had been like 'above ground'.

After the museum visit, we were very fortunate to be joined by two tour guides, who showed us around local areas of interest, from Downing Street (where the Prime Minister lives) to Buckingham Palace (where the Royal Family live). We learnt lots of interesting facts; for instance, did you know that there is an island in the middle of a lake in St James's Park, and it is here that the first 'headquarters' for the original British Secret Service were?

Lastly, we took a quick trip around the National Portrait Gallery, an art gallery opened in the late 19th Century displaying a collection of historically important British people. Students looked particularly at the exhibition of BP Portrait Award nominees, entered by artists from 92 countries around the world.

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