

Year 10

Oxford

University

'Taster Day'



On Thursday, 26th April, Mrs Darvill and I took 10 students to a taster day at Oxford University where we were assigned Keble College as a host. We were given a presentation about the university which included a description of the very supportive tutorial system.

All Oxford students attend lectures but they are also assigned a tutor to discuss materials/assignments in very small groups; sometimes there might only be 3 students working with the Tutor at one time.



We then moved to Jesus College where we had a workshop on Oxford student life. A number of facts were shared with us, including the following:

- 60% of current students have come from a State Comprehensive background.
- There were more women than men recruited last year.
- Jesus College was the first college to admit women in 1974, even though it had existed for 400 years!
- Studying at Oxford involves a lot of independent learning and you build your own timetable, taking into account any extra-curricular activities.
- There is a long admissions process because the university want, to make sure people are sure they can cope and really want to attend.
- You are admitted by one particular College and not the university as a whole. There are approximately 100 students per year group.
- 25% of students have some sort of financial support to attend.
- The entry grades for some of the subjects are not as high as Cambridge or Imperial College, for example. However, Oxford is looking for someone who has a passion for a particular subject and, what they call, 'intellectual bravery'. At an interview, the students would be challenged on their thinking and opinions about various subjects.

The Workshop Activities

During the workshop activities the students were split into groups and they looked at areas such as the different styles of studying (e.g. lecture, tutorials and independent learning). They also looked at the variety of extra-curricular activities and the timetable of a current student.

Next was a well-earned lunch in the beautiful college dining hall. This was followed by a small tour around Oxford where we saw:



Bodleian Library, one of the oldest libraries in Europe with over 12 million items.



'Bridge of Sighs' which is a skyway joining two parts of Hertford College over New College Lane and is a replica of the famous 'Bridge of Sighs' in Venice.



The students sat through 3 taster lectures. In Geography they learnt about water wars, in Zoology it was about evolution and in Ancient Languages they learnt about Lucretius.

It was a busy day in Oxford and one that I hope has benefitted our students. Comments from the students include:

I feel as if I am more reassured and understand the transition from school to university

It has inspired me to reach my maximum potential

This trip has inspired me to work harder to achieve the grades that I need, in order to fulfil my university experience

Enthusiasm, commitment and potential is the name of Oxford and the teachers have the time and resources to prepare their students.

Oxford wants to accept people of all backgrounds