



ST ALOYSIUS' COLLEGE

Arrupe Reflection – Owen of S5

Since Christmas I have been on placement at Kelbourne Park Primary School in the West End, a school for children with special needs. Having spent my first placement of the year in the British Heart Foundation, I was both excited and apprehensive for the different experiences I would have working with young children with disabilities.

However, settling in didn't take very long as the children very quickly welcomed me in to their community with open arms, and now I spend half an hour in the playground playing hide and seek every week and sit amongst them at their assemblies where they celebrate each other's success with standing ovations and songs.

One of the main reasons they have this kind of environment is the hard work of all of the teachers and classroom assistants in the school. They strike the perfect balance between being friendly and being the responsible adults, and all of the children really respect them. The teachers also seem to love their jobs in working with the children, as one of them told me 'there's never a dull moment at Kelbourne Park'

At this time in Fifth Year, all of my thoughts have been on my exams and working to achieve the best grades. However, Arrupe has really brought these thoughts into perspective. The children at this school will never have the same opportunities that we have in terms of their future; they might never know the true meaning of independence, yet their physical and mental limitations do not seem to faze them in any way. They are all so aware of their own situations and, perhaps more importantly, the situations of others around them.

There is a real sense of community amongst the pupils created by their genuine concern for one another. Going into this placement, I expected to be teaching the children things but, in fact, they have taught me so much more. Their selflessness is truly inspirational.

Looking back on my time at Kelbourne Park, I can confidently say that I have learned so much about myself and about other people. All those who work and learn there are a true inspiration to me and I will never forget this experience. I look forward to the rest of my time at the school for this placement has made Arrupe the highlight of my week.