

Platanos College News

Friday 6th July 2018

Switch Off Prejudice Anne Frank Exhibition

Last month we were fortunate to work in collaboration with the Anne Frank Trust; an organisation set up with the purpose of teaching young people about discrimination and prejudice and its impact on society today.

Anne Frank was a Dutch teenager who died at the age of 15 in the Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp, Germany. Her tragic death in February 1945 (three months before the end of World War II) became immortalised when her father decided to publish Anne's personal diary. This diary evidenced the discrimination of Jews under the control of the Nazi government in the 1930s and 40s and conveyed to the world a valuable lesson about what happens when discrimination is allowed to go too far.



Above: Anne Frank, her father Otto, and their family.

Right: Anne Frank with her diary.



The Anne Frank Trust was set up by her father, Otto Frank, to help educate young people about how this ordinary girl became the victim of the Nazi campaign of terror against Jews across Europe. The Holocaust claimed the lives of at least six million people. The Anne Frank Trust worked with us at Platanos College to run the "Switch Off Prejudice" Programme.

The programme involved setting up a temporary exhibition housed within the school detailing the life of the Frank family, the struggle of going into hiding for two years, and how tragedy

struck once the Nazis uncovered the family's location which led to Anne's death. This story is set against the backdrop of the rise of Nazi control in Germany and Hitler's powerful rhetoric which was used to portray Jews as scapegoats for Germany's problems in the 1920s and 1930s.



Our Peer Guides being trained by a representative of the Anne Frank Trust to lead the exhibition.



Anne Frank's story is one which resonates with us today as prejudice and discrimination are still prevalent in the world around us. This is evident from switching on the news and listening to political stories and can be seen even in local news stories. A group of 27 students were chosen from our Year 9 cohort to become Peer Guides. They were trained to explain portions of the exhibition to other Year 9 students, as well as our Year 7 and 8 students. The subject matter was explained with sensitivity but introduced our younger students to a reality of human nature.

Over a two-week period students in Key Stage 3 were exposed to the story of Anne Frank and were led around the exhibition by our knowledgeable guides. Students were able to ask the Peer Guides questions to investigate how and why such a tragic event like the Holocaust was able to happen. Our Key Stage Three students showed curiosity and engagement in the exhibition and impressed the organisers from the Anne Frank Trust who oversaw the training of our Guides.



It was a delight to see so many of our students grow in confidence when explaining the story, as well as becoming emboldened to challenge discrimination and prejudice. They did so by evaluating examples of discrimination such as disability discrimination and racism during their workshops which fitted around the viewings of the Anne Frank exhibition.

Not only did students learn about a valuable lesson from history, they worked on their skills of presentation, persuasion, and will develop their work as advocates by creating a social media campaign during the next step in the project.

Our Year 9 Peer Guides certainly rose to the challenge by tackling thought-provoking questions from their audiences, remaining professional in following a timetable, and working as a team to ensure each viewing of the exhibition went off without a hitch.

Students were overwhelmingly positive about the learning gains they made from being involved in the project citing their enjoyment of presenting, teaching, and working in groups to

successfully get across an important message about discrimination. A number of students who felt they were unable to present at the start of the project were literally punching the air as their confidence grew with each guided session. Some of our youngest students asked the most challenging questions regarding the role of genocide in more recent history and reflected on current trends in politics and society.



We are pleased to announce that the Anne Frank Trust will return to the school next academic year to work with eight of the Peer Guides who have shown most growth over this project. The programme will culminate in students becoming Anne Frank Ambassadors and producing their own social media campaigns under guidance. They will promote their chosen issue on social media platforms and through assemblies which will be directed by the Anne Frank Trust and visible to other schools in the campaign.

These Ambassadors will be making their mark on the wider world by competing and working in collaboration with a number of other schools in the London area to demonstrate a spirit of ingenuity and determination representing our students at their very best.