

SCHOOL REPORT

Autumn Term 2018

BREAKING THE TABOO

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Well rounded

From the IB Diploma to International Summer School, how Felsted School has been recognised as a world leader

Words SOPHY AITKEN

In January 2018, Felsted School hosted the Round Square Regional Conference for Europe and the Mediterranean. As a global member school, this was an incredible honour, hosting 180 participants from 27 schools. But you may ask... what is Round Square?

It is a worldwide network of innovative schools in 50 countries across six continents that are characterised by a shared approach to education, based on the theories of Kurt Hahn. The Round Square values are encapsulated by the IDEALS, a fitting acronym that stands for Internationalism, Democracy, Environmentalism, Adventure, Leadership and Service.

Their students decided that democracy should be the theme for the conference, particularly after the Brexit referendum and the swearing in of Donald Trump. Although neither of these things essentially threaten democracy, or indeed international opportunities, the rhetoric seen in the press and on social media highlights the importance of engaging with these subjects through the lens of a conversation on democratic voice and free will. What better place to do that than at an international conference, where students will inevitably be working with people from different countries and cultures.

The pupils challenged themselves




through conversations around the concept of democracy, exploring differing viewpoints, listening to keynote speakers, participating in workshops, presenting to the adult delegation and contributing to their themed performing arts session. The adult delegates (typically a Round Square representative and the head of each school) took part in collaborative activities that are similarly themed with the intention of inspiring them to develop their own curricula, initiatives and ideas once they return home.

The future of their pupils is at the forefront of everything they do at Felsted. Providing opportunities for each child so that they are not solely capable of passing exams, but also have a desire to solve problems creatively and collaborate with each other, is becoming increasingly crucial. Their conference worked as a springboard for exploring these topics within their student body, and the Round Square IDEALS help to facilitate the dialogue while simultaneously allowing for discussions concerning other opportunities. Exchanges to the USA, Spain, China, Germany and many other countries are on the increase at Felsted, the intrinsic value



of experiential education is becoming more broadly recognised and participation at conferences is on the increase. These global opportunities, alongside classroom lessons, are what children need to become true global citizens, regardless of where they might study or which country they originate from.

Although the conference was a key means to uncover a deeper layer within the IDEALS, Felsted are continually looking to achieve this in as many areas as possible, through the International Baccalaureate Diploma, MUN or International Summer School. Indeed, the Summer School offers an entire Global Studies programme, hinged on Global Citizenship, Leadership, Politics and the Art of Negotiation.

The future is in our pupils' hands. They will be responsible for making decisions and for taking initiatives that will shape the future of society. Felsted's membership of the Round Square provides opportunities for pupils to build the skills they need to do that effectively. The key is to connect pupils so that they can work productively alongside each other, regardless of culture or nation. This amounts to an experience that they relish and memories that last a lifetime. At Felsted they do all that they can to build character in the next generation so they can truly make a difference in the world around them. 

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