

REPORT from Adele REDMOND of Cashmere High School

My trip to Kurashiki (the sister city of Christchurch) in Japan was one of the best experiences of my life. I was hosted with a kind, generous and fun family who spoke English; which was helpful and allowed me to learn new Japanese words and enjoy the amazing things I did with them a lot more.

With a group of fourteen other students from schools around Christchurch and two Tour Leaders, I visited places which seem to spring out of old bedtime storybooks- Okayama Castle with its beautiful surround: Korakuen Gardens, one of the prettiest in Japan. Entsuji Temple; where the Buddhist monks still live with their shaved heads and robes, meditating for hours a day. We visited Kurashiki Bikan historical area- shops selling traditional sweets and other things border a river with carp as long as your arm, running under the ancient stone bridges. Then there is Hiroshima peace museum, filled with horrific reminders of the atomic bomb tragedies of WWII. However, we also saw the newer side of Japan- Amusement parks, Aeon shopping centre, bullet trains, Kansai airport and Universal Studios were only some of the modern wonders we experienced. Part of the exchange was that we went to school for four days, and although being the only foreigner and the subject of constant discussion is a little daunting, everyone was very friendly and I made friends with many people; even if I don't remember their names.

Overall, my trip to Japan was amazing and I look forward to a time when I can go back there again.

Adele Redmond

