**Being a Foreign Language Assistant at Kingswood School Bath** *by Frieda Witting*

Walking into Kingswood School was like stepping into an Enid Blyton novel. The buildings are sat on one of the hills surrounding Bath which provides a spectacular view over the city, and an easy workout on the walk up from the centre. There are elaborate grounds where the students have PE lessons and get to spend their breaks, a swimming pool for everybody’s use and a great dining hall that looks like it is straight out of a Harry Potter book.

The whole school oozes comfort and homeliness, something incredibly important for boarding students and resident staff alike where 24 hours per day, seven days a week are spent living and learning together. With six boarding houses around the campus, there is always something going on and the boarding community of two three girls’ houses, two boys’ houses and one co-educational lower school house stands strong with organised trips and events that everybody is welcome to join.

The possibilities seem countless: beach trips, amusement parks, barbeques, music evenings, theatre trips to Bristol and London, water sliding in the summer, sledding in the winter (yes, it snowed for **one** whole day!), school drama productions and concerts, art showings, Christmas and Hogmanay dinner, charity events and a big leavers’ ball at the end of the school year. It is impossible not to forget something when listing all the fun things that are put in place for the students. The best thing about it is arguably that the language assistants get to join in.

As a language assistant in class, time is split between different year groups. With years 7, 8, 9 and 10, the work is done in small groups during lessons. Three to four students at once get to practise their speaking with dialogues and photo cards. The year 11 students spend their lunchtime activities practising for their GCSE exams. Again, photo cards and dialogues are used, and in addition, there is a contingent of free conversation that helps the pupils to become more fluent in their replies.

The Sixth Form spend the most time with the assistant. In one on one sessions, their grammar, pronunciation or literature analysis skills could be covered. These lessons like no others are down to what student and teacher communicate. Whilst still following the curriculum, it means that students get to point out their difficulties and problems with the material. It is a rewarding job, at the latest when the A Level results come in and the hard work has paid off.

Besides the work in the classroom, some contribution to the boarding community is expected. The duties are usually covered by resident staff but every now and then, especially when there is a parents’ evening, the language assistants step in and supervise homework time or evening programme. These special shifts are the reason for a bond beyond the class room and with students you do not see on a daily basis during your lessons. The kids appreciate someone who is involved and genuinely cares about them with all their problems, interests and achievements. As a reward they offer respect and trust which, in a community like Kingswood, is important to everybody. Personally, the evenings spent herding girls to bed are some of the most cherished experiences I got to make during my time in Bath.

As the Foreign Language Assistant for German 2018/19, I got to live this tight-knit community in all its facets, from breakfast queues in the lunch hall to late night chats in a boarding house. It was a great time and this short text can only scratch the surface.

However, Göttingen University will send a new assistant to Bath. Then, it could be you.