

Callum's story

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Callum is a Year 10 pupil at the Observatory School in the Wirral, a secondary school for pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

When the school arranged an Erasmus+ trip to its eTwinning partner school in Finland Callum signed up to go.

But when it came to departure time, Callum found his fear of the unknown was too much for him and he backed out.

Thanks to the school's belief in the value of international opportunities for its pupils, a few months later Callum was offered a place on the trip to France and this time he was determined to get on the plane.

'I didn't want to regret it again. The first time is always nervous. But my friends helped a lot.'

Callum describes his experience as an exploration, *'I felt like I was in a whole new area, exploring new areas and countries, getting to know what it's like.'*

And he discovered that it was easy to make friends with pupils in the French school. 'French people were kind of different but they still have the same emotions. In the end I didn't really feel that far from home.'

Callum is hoping to go on another school trip to Italy next year and thinking about other places in the world he'd like to see. His teachers at the Observatory School have been amazed to see how much his confidence has grown since the trip.

'I feel lucky. I'm glad I came to this school. My trip to France was great, it helps your confidence. Once you've done it once you can do it again.'



Pupils join Deputy Head Sarah Gower to discuss their eTwinning project with their French partners.

The Observatory School was awarded International School of the Year in the TES School Awards 2019. Its international work includes an eTwinning project with schools in France, Spain, Finland, Italy and Turkey. The project focuses on communication and ICT skills, intercultural European awareness, citizenship and entrepreneurship and creativity.