

Westfields Sports

First in Australia

Japan Tour 2009

This year 18 students and two teachers experienced a trip of a life time. 10 days in Japan, visiting famous temples and shrines and learning about Japanese culture.

On behalf of the students and myself I thank Marcela Ayas, head teacher of Language for her many hours of arduous hours of preparation. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank a new member of staff Rosie Award, who helped us in raising funds.

Our tour began in Tokyo the capital city of Japan, which has a population of over 18 million. Our first day was spent at Disney World in long lines, after Disney World we travelled to our Sister School, Kasukabe Kyohei. For over 15 years Kasukabe has been visiting Westfields Sports for a cultural exchange. This was our opportunity to visit them. We were warmly welcomed and were presented with the National Anthem, played by their World renowned brass band. For the day we visited classrooms and learnt how Japanese students conducted themselves in their school. We were impressed by the fact that their school is cleaned by the students themselves!



Most of the Westfields students said that their highlight was staying with their host families. We were all well looked after by our hosts and we learnt about Japanese culture and Japanese food. It's not everyday you get to eat fried eel, squid or salmon roe.

After spending three days with our host families it was time for us to leave. We travelled to Kyoto by the bullet train, which travels at about 300km per hour. After arriving in Kyoto we were amazed at the size of the train station, which is the 2nd largest in the world. We soon travelled to the Inari shrine which featured in the movie "Memoirs of a Geisha". In fact many places from the book were based on the city of Kyoto. We visited many famous shrines and temples, the most spectacular being in Nara, "Daibutsu Dan" The largest wooden structure in the world, which houses the largest bronze Buddha in Japan. The sheer size and the beautiful surroundings were overwhelming.

On our final day we experienced the ancient art of tea ceremony but that was overshadowed by shopping in Osaka in Shinsaibashi. Shinsaibashi is one of the oldest shopping districts in Japan. It's a covered shopping street which stretches as long as the eye can see and with stores lined down both sides. Shopping is a Japanese past time and some students excelled at this activity.

The tour of Japan was a fantastic experience, what made the tour a success was the impeccable behaviour of all students. We hope in years to come that this tour will continue offering Westfield's students the opportunity to experience Japan.

Mr Grace
Teacher of Japanese

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