



School Trip to Parliament: A Glimpse into British Politics

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Students from Plympton Academy had the opportunity to visit the heart of British democracy on a trip to the Houses of Parliament in London. The visit provided an insight into the workings of government, the glory of historical traditions, and the chance to witness politics in action.

Our journey began at the very entrance where the King himself enters for the State Opening of Parliament, an event that happens only once a year. Walking in the footsteps of royalty was a surreal experience, immediately starting positively for the day ahead. We then visited the King's Dressing Room, a beautifully adorned space where monarchs prepare before official events. Interestingly, Queen Victoria once envisioned adding virtual reality-style artwork to the walls, showing how even centuries ago, innovation and tradition were closely linked.

One of the most fascinating stops was the Henry VIII Room, lined with paintings of his six wives. The impressiveness of this room, combined with its connection to such famous kings and queens, made history feel alive around us. We also explored the room where bills—proposed laws—are distributed to those observing debates, additionally able to hold a copy of one of these bills, helping us understand the legislative process before laws are officially passed.

The House of Lords was a spectacular sight. Its rich red and gold decor is designed to reflect its status, making it clear why it is considered more luxurious than the House of Commons. Though it appeared smaller than it seems on television, the intricate gold detailing on the throne and walls gave it a taste of power and tradition.

We then moved to the House of Commons, where we were lucky enough to witness a live debate from the public gallery. A glass wall separated us from the MPs, but thanks to the speakers, we could clearly hear the discussions taking place. Seeing democracy in action made us appreciate how crucial these debates are in shaping the country's laws and policies.

Another moving moment was visiting Westminster Hall, where Queen Elizabeth II lay in state following her passing in 2022. The historic hall, dating back to 1097, has witnessed many key events, including the trials of King Charles I and Guy Fawkes. Seeing the simple plank on the floor marking where Her Majesty had rested reminded us of the deep history surrounding us and how much respect she had.

Beyond the impressive rooms and historic artefacts, one of the most inspiring moments of the day was meeting Lords and Baronesses. They answered our questions about the future of politics and shared advice on how young people can engage in shaping the country's future.

This trip gave us a new appreciation for the UK's political system, from the grand traditions to the debates shaping our future. It was a day filled with history, learning, and inspiration—one that we won't forget.

