

ABERDEENSHIRE

CET REFLECTION

HOW'S THE LIFE IN ABERDEENSHIRE? RURAL PLACE WITH RICH EXPERIENCE!

Xiaoyan Zeng, Chinese Exchange Teacher in Aberdeenshire

What's your first impression of Aberdeenshire? Far northern place? Cold place? Rural place? Well, that's all true, but it's not the whole picture. When I first heard I was going to Aberdeenshire based in New Pitsligo, what I heard from others about this place were all these descriptions which made me feel a bit worried and anxious. But after living here for more than 8 months, I gradually fell in love with this place and decided that I must give it a proper name based on my actual experiences.



I work in five different schools, so I am in a different place every day, but I feel welcome and like a part of the school every day. Especially in my base school, New Pitsligo and St John's Primary School. I'll never forget the warm hugs and lovely song they gave me when I first arrived. This enthusiastic vibe continued all the time and never disappeared. I was invited to share what happens in China when it is Mid-Autumn Festival at the school assembly; I was invited to see the school Christmas show at night; and I was invited to be the audience of their choir. I feel so warm-hearted when the pupils say my name and greet me with *Nihao*, even though they are so young to be having mandarin lesson.

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The schools here are very separated which makes my commutes quite tricky because there is no direct bus to the schools. To deal with this issue, my mentor Gillian managed everything very well and all my schools found local teachers to give me a ride. So every day I can meet with different teachers and talk with them on the road. They are very kind and friendly, generously sharing their teaching experiences, considering my life here, recommending fun places to go on weekends. Picking me up is not their duty but they are all fine and happy to take on this task. I feel so thankful for their time and work and I have to say my listening and speaking improved a lot because of them, which I really appreciate!



My P7 class has asked for a school trip to China at least 3 times! So I can see how much they like China and how confident they feel about their Mandarin. I'll never forget the proud and satisfied feelings I had when they were making progress and achieving higher levels. The images of us talking about different foods, different school life, different festivals and decorating the class with the atmosphere of Chinese New Year are so vivid, as if they are right before my eyes. I just can't believe how time flies so fast and there is not much more time left with them. I will miss all of them and cherish my rich experience in rural Aberdeenshire for my whole life!