

This pupil is aged 16 and in the Lower Sixth year. She joined Kilgraston in August 2018 from her native Veracruz in Mexico and will stay at the school for up to two years.

- **How did you choose Kilgraston?** I made a list of UK schools from web sites, also I had a family connections to the school. Most of my family have done an exchange year somewhere in the world. We started looking at UK schools about six months before I arrived at Kilgraston. I liked the Sacred Heart aspect of the school and that it was all girls. I was in a co-ed before Kilgraston so this is a very new experience. Really like single-sex environment; here you can really be yourself with no pressure from boys.
- **What should you look for when looking for a school?** Look at the relationship between staff and pupils and the facilities on offer with sport and music. Look forward to the future and ask if this school will give you the background for adult life.
- **Did you feel homesick?** Only for the first night, everyone was so kind and involved me in all the clubs and activities so I didn't feel sad for very long. Of course it was a big step living without my parents and learning to do all the things by myself, but everyone made me feel like this was home.
- **What are your favourite subjects?** Maths, Business Studies, ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) and Biology at Higher Level. I am hoping to do Marine Biology at university. Perhaps at a British university but, if not, certainly with an exchange year to a university in the UK.
- **What are your other interests at school?** I love the facilities for sport and music here at Kilgraston. I have started to learn to play the piano and badminton here.
- **What is the biggest difference from Kilgraston to school in Mexico?** In Mexico there is a much more limited choice in subjects that you can take. Also, boarding makes you so much more independent – I know the friendships developed here will last forever.
- **Did you feel daunted about coming so far from home?** At the beginning; it was a new country, a new lifestyle, but, at the same time, a new opportunity to learn a language and open yourself to the world. It was sad when I had to wave goodbye to my family here at school, but I think that having them here, it comforted me to move forward. I quickly fitted into the routine and settled in well.
- **What is the living accommodation like at Kilgraston?** I have my own room with a sink, desk and shelves and big notice board. I can make the room as personal as I like with posters and fairy lights. There is no restriction to the number of things you can put up on the walls. I brought my own duvet cover and pillowcase so it felt very homely. My house is called Barat which is home to 20 girls in Lower and Upper Sixth.

There is a common room where we all meeting in the evenings and a kitchen so we can make hot drinks and food and watch TV together.

- **The Kilgraston school week runs from Monday to Friday so how do you spend your weekends?** There are always lots of activities laid on. I practice my piano and do prep but we can go into Perth to go shopping; about a ten minute taxi ride. We've also done skating, cinema visits, shopping trips to Edinburgh and theatre outings. Breakfast is at 10am on a Sunday so we all have a lie in! We can always walk around the lovely school grounds or leave the campus in pairs – we have to get permission and sign out beforehand though. I have also been to the cities of Edinburgh (*an hour*) and Dundee (*half an hour*) for the day with a friend on the train.
- **How have you found studying in English as your native language is Spanish?** My English wasn't great when I first arrived at Kilgraston but everyone in my class speaks fluent English so I picked it up very quickly. Also, the ESOL PET (the preliminary exam for pupils at B1 level (CEF)) class has been a huge help plus I speak it with girls and staff throughout the school so now I'm almost fluent.
- **How did you find the ban on mobile phones?** At first I was a bit shocked!, Back at home, everyone has their phone out all of the time. However, I got used to it very quickly and because everyone follow the rules no one makes a big thing about it so now nobody thinks about having access during the day. Because Kilgraston is such a small school, every member of staff knows you by name - and your background - so there is always someone around who is able to help if you need it.
- **How do you find the food?** It is a lot less spicy than the food at home but it is very healthy here and there is plenty of choice.
- **What is your favourite thing about Kilgraston?** Everyone accepts themselves as they are and the differences that they have. Kilgraston makes you grow as a person, in all aspects; experience new things and create friendships that will be remembered forever
- **Was the weather a problem?** Very different to home; wrap up warmly!