

KS2 Geography. A location in Europe

Haarlem, Netherlands

MIKA (IN ENGLISH): My name is Mika, and I'm 10 years old. I live in the city of Haarlem.

MIKA (TRANSLATED): Haarlem is a lovely city with lots of typical, old Dutch buildings. So it may look old-fashioned but it's very nice living here. The River Spaarne runs through Haarlem, and it connects to the North Sea Canal. You can't miss the river. It is part of Haarlem and the city life.

I'd say Haarlem is full of creative people. It's a pretty relaxed place with plenty of music, arts and dance. I love dance, especially street dancing. It's really fun to dance with friends because with different kinds of music we make the dance. I like street dancing a lot because it's really cool but also different.

I love going shopping or stopping off for something yummy to eat. Have you tried *oliebol*? This is something typically Dutch. *Oliebol* are delicious, warm and also very sweet. I'd like to show you a great cheese shop we have in the centre of Haarlem. My dad and I really love Dutch cheese. Thank you. Mmm!

Our favourite cheese can be translated to English as 'old cheese'. I love old cheese because it's a bit sharp and crumbly. This is a typical Dutch cheese.

You probably know Haarlem is really famous for its flowers, especially tulips. My mother's favourite tulips are the pink ones. I can't show you any blossoming tulip fields but I can show you something interesting about the bulbs. Because now it is bulb planting time. In spring, all these fields will be covered in flowers. Rob is a flower and bulb grower.

This is where the tulips are. And over there, under the greenery, we've planted the daffodils. Rob plants thousands of bulbs out in the fields. He plants 20 million bulbs a year! Lex is his son, and he also wants to be a bulb and flower grower. This family specialises in hyacinths, daffodils, crocuses and, of course, tulips!

MIKA (TRANSLATED):

Let's see if we can find a tulip. They are buried quite deep. Yes, they are about 10 centimetres deep. In March, April, that is when they will flower. This is time for their winter sleep. It is also when the flowers have time to grow inside the bulbs. In the winter, some of the bulbs are planted by hand in peat.

The hyacinths are a big part of their business. You probably recognise the Delft blue hyacinth. I think the bulbs look a bit like red onions! That is my grandfather. These are all hyacinth bulbs. They have to make sure the roots are planted correctly. This is so the flowers grow straight and not crooked.

My mum likes planting daffodil and crocus bulbs in our garden. She also plants them in the winter. I think it's a real shame that I can't show you the beautiful flowers when they come out.

But I can show you my great new pony. His name is Billy, and I just got him a few weeks ago. It was a huge surprise, and I was very happy. I love Billy because he's brave, and cute, and sweet, and small, and fat.

I'd don't need many words with Billy because when you have a thought, horses can read your mind. So, when you're sad, then your pony is sad. But when you're happy, your pony is also happy!