



**Evidence for
Excellence in
Education**

Case Study Report

Improving Employability Skills, Enriching Our Economy

National Foundation for Educational
Research (NFER)
London Councils
London Enterprise Panel
South East Strategic Leaders (SESL)



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Published in March 2015
By the National Foundation for Educational Research,
The Mere, Upton Park, Slough, Berkshire SL1 2DQ
Registered Charity No. 313392
www.nfer.ac.uk

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ISBN 978-1-910008-48-5

How to cite this publication:

National Foundation for Educational Research, London Councils, London Enterprise Panel and South East Strategic Leaders. (2015). *Improving Employability Skills, Enriching Our Economy*. Slough: NFER.

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1 Introduction

Together London and the South East are the economic powerhouse of the UK, generating gross value added (GVA) of £565 billion to the UK economy in 2013¹. Our continuing economic success cannot, however, be taken for granted; rather, it is dependent on ensuring a pipeline of workers equipped with the skills that current and future businesses need to succeed and grow.

Businesses and educational institutions together have an important role to play in addressing skills gaps and equipping young people with the employability skills they need to make a successful transition into work.

In London and the South East, micro businesses (with between 0-9 employees) and small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) (businesses with fewer than 250 employees) in particular have an important role to play. In London SMEs represent 99.8 per cent of businesses while in the South East they account for 99.6 per cent of firms (London Enterprise Panel, 2013²).

This case study report highlights promising practice examples of how businesses, including micro firms and SMEs, are already engaging effectively with secondary schools and colleges.

The examples demonstrate the breadth and depth of ways that employers can get involved in shaping the future workforce and point to emerging initiatives which seek to broker meaningful links between employers and educators locally.

These examples have been unearthed through joint research undertaken by London Councils, the London Enterprise Panel, and the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) and South East Strategic Leaders (SESL). A report summarising our research findings is available www.nfer.ac.uk/employability.

Based on the evidence gathered, we have also produced a 'connect card' – a simple, practical tool to facilitate meaningful conversations between SMEs and schools and colleges. By prompting honest dialogue about the expectations of employers and educators and talking through the practicalities of working in partnership, this card has been designed to facilitate the emergence of effective education-business link activities which are more likely to be sustained over time. The connect card is available www.nfer.ac.uk/employability.

¹ ONS – Regional GVA (Income Approach) December 2014 (Regional GVA NUTS1, 1997-2013).

² London Enterprise Panel (2013). *Jobs and Growth Plan for London*. London: GLA.

2 Hampshire Investors in Young People Award

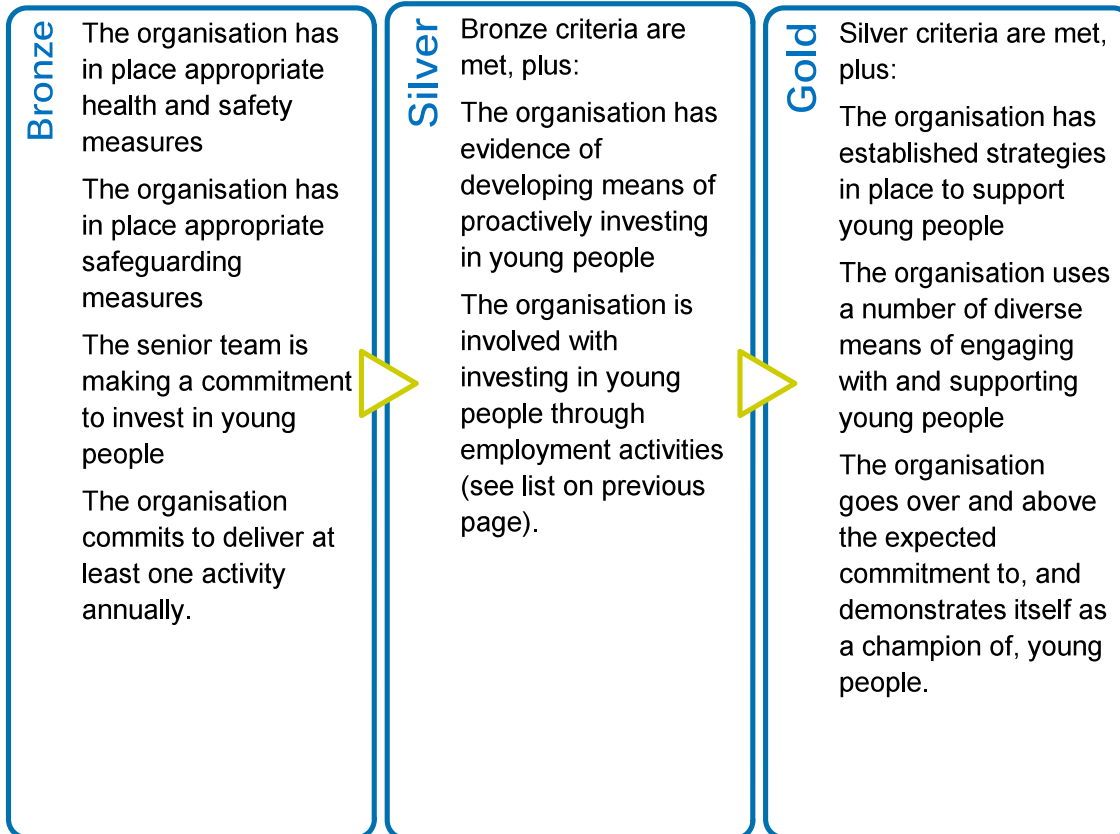


Hampshire County Council is committed to supporting all young people in Hampshire to make a successful transition from education to employment or self employment by fostering strong and beneficial relationships between students, schools and local businesses. Through the Careers and Employment service, the Council is seeking to help local employers to access employees with the right skills to help their businesses grow.

The Hampshire Investors in Young People Award has been developed as a means of recognising and raising the profile of employers who are actively supporting young people through pre-employment or employment activities including:

- **involvement in a local school** - careers talks, enterprise activities, one-to-one mentoring, hosting workplace visits and participating in mock interviews
- **work experience** - providing opportunities for young people to gain insight into work
- **traineeships** - to give hands-on experience of working life for up to five months
- **apprenticeships** - using the structured and supported apprenticeship framework
- **Duke of Edinburgh award** – helping young people develop their potential
- **school governors** - embedding employability within schools' leadership and management
- **corporate sponsorship** – sponsoring careers fairs or sharing resources and facilities.

The award recognises and raises awareness of good practice in order to expand the network of employers able to support young people. Any business with a main address in Hampshire can make an application for the award, which comprises three categories – bronze, silver and gold.



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3 Kent Tourism and Hospitality Guild



In Kent, a new Tourism and Hospitality Guild is being developed between employers and providers to raise the profile of the sector as an attractive and sustainable career option, and to refocus activity on streamlining entry and progression pathways for students from age 14.

The Guild provides practical support through the development of skills interventions, locally responsive sector-based curricula and training pathways from schools to higher education. Students are able to experience high profile employment environments through aspirational 'red letter days'.

The project steering group is coordinated by Visit Kent which provides links to an extensive network of employers. One offshoot is a programme bringing business leaders into schools to raise the profile of opportunities in the hospitality sector. Businesses also give practical support as work experience providers and perform strong advocacy roles for the sector.

The Guild will host a zone at 'Kent Choices 4U Live' - a careers fair attracting 5000 young people. The zone will promote the sector through interactive activities, including demonstrations by celebrity chef Rosemary Shrager, a key partner in the Guild.

Kent plans to create a web-based portal enabling employers to signpost their changing employment and skills needs, to ensure providers can meet existing demand and deliver skills pipelines in advance of future requirements. The portal will provide training and skills information, advice and guidance about entry paths to the sector and a means for employers to advertise development and career opportunities. The portal will link with Kent County Council's Kent Choices 4U website.

A new Kent passport will provide demonstration of the skills and experience achieved for those seeking to enter and progress within the tourism and hospitality sector - a mark of personal progress, achievement and quality service delivery.

Rather than reinvent the wheel, the steering group is drawing on work by People 1st, a skills and workforce development charity, to develop a national hospitality guild³. This is providing access to existing good practice, materials, accreditation and quality award expertise. Similarly, the passport will not create a new local 'qualification' but draw on the best and most appropriate qualifications, experience, guidance and support for skills required by the sector.

³ <http://www.hospitalityguild.co.uk/Home>

4 Kent post-16 offer

Kent County Council's Skills and Employability team has been working with local schools to develop a better understanding of the flexibilities inherent in the Department for Education's study programme framework to respond to identified needs. A study programme can include:

- i. five A levels, or
- ii. a Technical Baccalaureate programme which includes a substantial Level 3 technical qualification, Level 3 core maths and an extended project, or
- iii. a programme which includes maths and English, work experience and technical learning.

These models of delivery express Kent's ambition for all young people to become more skilled and qualified, to have access to high levels of vocational education and to improve their employment prospects by raising attainment levels; improving and extending vocational education, training and apprenticeships; increasing participation and employment; and targeting support to young vulnerable people⁴.

The third model quickly became known as the 2–1–2 model, named after the ratio of time spent on component activities.

Simply put, each week students undertake two days of key skills to raise attainment in English and maths and achieve GCSEs in these subjects, with support targeted for vulnerable young people who may not otherwise achieve these qualifications. Students then have one day of high quality work experience, providing valuable employability skills and preparing them for progression into further work or an apprenticeship. Finally, students undergo two days of technical learning.

An evaluation⁵ of the 2-1-2 model was undertaken in September 2014 using qualitative research techniques to assess schools', pupils' and businesses' experiences of the model. It concluded:

- Integration of work experience within a programme of vocational study was viewed as beneficial and supported the development of key employability skills in young people.
- Although some schools reported barriers to establishing an effective model, the example of Canterbury High School (see below) demonstrates

⁴Kent County Council. (2013). *14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy 2013-2016*. Kent: Kent County Council [online]. Available: https://shareweb.kent.gov.uk/Documents/KELSI/Curriculum%20and%20pupil%20learning/Skills%20and%20employability/14_24strategy2013.pdf [24 February, 2015].

⁵ Undertaken by Strategic and Corporate Services, Kent CC.

that appropriate planning, distribution of resources and learning can overcome these difficulties.

- The model supports research which suggests that engagement in structured, regular work experience is associated with positive outcomes, including improved employability skills, confidence and motivation.
- Employers engaged found the model to be mutually beneficial to both students and themselves as they were able to assess the skills needs of potential future employees.
- The model can support the ongoing engagement in education of young people who may otherwise have disengaged from learning due to a lack of appropriate provision.
- The model broadens the post-16 offer and, as a result of this availability, young people reported they engaged with further education for longer.

In conclusion, the evaluation found that the 2-1-2 model adds value to the technical education offer in Kent and supports the development of closer relationships between training providers and employers, which has been identified by several studies⁶ as key to closing the skills gap.

As such, it should be promoted to schools as a programme which not only extends the provision of vocational learning to vulnerable learners, but which could also benefit a wide range of students by providing them with valuable workplace experience.

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⁶ For example, *Models of engagement with employers*, LSIS, (2010) and *'Precarious Futures: Youth employment in an international context'* (2014).

5 Canterbury high school: 2-1-2 model

Canterbury High School is a strong advocate of the importance of providing industry relevant work experience to young people and has been running a programme aligned to Kent's 2-1-2 model for the last three years.

The retention rate for the programme is excellent, with only one student dropping out during the 2012/13 academic year and a full rate of retention in 2013/14. A key aspect of success has been the ability to develop the programme over three academic years, allowing the sixth form team to overcome initial problems.

Feedback from students studying subjects within the 2-1-2 model has been widely very positive. Two students studying Level 2 hairdressing reported their enjoyment of the course and the value of their work experience placements in helping them gain the vocational and employability skills required to progress. Both students have accepted part-time jobs with their work placement employer.

Another student studying Level 2 catering said his interest in this industry was sparked by the Jamie Oliver BTEC course he undertook in food technology. He is keen to work in the catering sector in the future and believes that the basic skills he has learnt thus far will be a valuable basis for forging a career.

The in-house restaurant enables catering students to gain experience in all aspects of catering, such as food preparation, catering for large numbers of people, serving and front-of-house customer service. This is enhanced by a work placement at a pub and restaurant in Canterbury.

All of the students reported that, if the 2-1-2 model at Canterbury High School had not been available, they would have chosen to study their course at college where they would not have benefitted from the integrated work experience. Students were confident that suitable support systems were in place should they need them and felt the programme was managed well, equipping them with skills and confidence to participate in work.

The next stage in the development and progression of these types of programmes at Canterbury High School will be to cultivate working relationships with more local employers. An increasing number of employers are now volunteering to work with young people in this learning environment, viewing the programme as a pool of potential future employees. There remains, however, some difficulty in obtaining successful work experience placements for construction students, for example, mainly due to barriers related to the health and safety concerns that arise on a working construction site.

6 K&M McLoughlin Decorating Ltd – pre-apprenticeship and employability programme



K&M McLOUGHLIN
DECORATING LTD

K&M McLoughlin Decorating Ltd is a family-owned painting and decorating company set up in 1988 by Kevin McLoughlin. Kevin left school age 15 and worked his way up from apprentice to boss of a multi-million pound turnover company with 120 employees. For Kevin, tackling skills shortages in the construction industry is critical to continuing business success. Over 2014-2017, labour requirements for construction are expected to average 20 per cent higher than the previous four years, leading to growing skills gaps⁷.

I cannot earn money without good people. That's a fact of life.

Kevin McLoughlin

To tackle this challenge, and in response to a lack of relevant training provision, K&M McLoughlin established their own college. Their aim was to equip young people with the practical skills and work ethic required for subsequent employment and to foster genuine interest in the construction industry.

Their rolling apprenticeship programme has been highly successful and the firm has retained over 90 per cent of qualified apprentices within the company.

In 2012, at the invitation of Islington council Leader Catherine West, the firm set up its corporate social responsibility five-week pre-apprenticeship and employability programme in partnership with Islington Council's Business Employment Support team and City and Islington College.

K&M's employability programme is free for unemployed 16-24 year olds referred by Islington council. The programme is designed to give young people real work experience while instilling a strong work ethic, emphasising the importance of punctuality, commitment, teamwork, rules and regulations.

This is a local scheme. It's about local people, getting local jobs, with local companies.

Kevin McLoughlin

About 20 individuals are taken on every five weeks and expected to work from 8am to 5pm undertaking painting and decorating work in K&M's model construction site. Students receive mentoring from a skilled K&M tradesperson and have the opportunity to gain a Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) card, enabling them to go on site, work-aware and ready for further training within the industry.

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<http://www.kpmg.com/UK/en/IssuesAndInsights/ArticlesPublications/Documents/PDF/Market%20Sector/Building%20and%20Construction/skills-to-build-report.pdf>

If I didn't do this scheme I'd just be at home, lying about and not really doing anything with my life. Now it's a whole different story – I'm out, I'm earning money, I'm working and I'm happy.

Former K&M apprentice Jack Cloiser, 17 from Camden

Individual progress against key performance indicators, including attendance, punctuality, painting skills and positive attitudes, is displayed on a wall chart which potential employers refer to during employer open days. Those who do well are put forward to companies for employment.

Impact:

- **232** young people trained over 17 courses
- **105** employable and recommended for jobs
- **101** in full time work
- **38** in two-year full vocational apprenticeships
- **96 per cent** success rate into employment from employable attendees
- **135** CSCS cards gained.

K&M won Heart of the City's Dragon Award – the longest running award that recognises excellence in corporate community engagement programmes.

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7 K&M McLoughlin Decorating Ltd and Barking & Dagenham College



K&M McLOUGHLIN
DECORATING LTD

Barking and Dagenham is one of London's most impoverished boroughs. It has the highest percentage of out-of-work claimants in the capital and the fourth highest child poverty rate. Education is vital to tackling these challenges and preparing young people for work – something Barking and Dagenham College is passionate about.

The college is one of 23 Gazelle colleges in the UK – colleges committed to creating opportunities for young people to develop entrepreneurial attributes through education. The college works with local employers and community stakeholders to create the conditions for employment and employment opportunities for students. A good example of this is the decorating project carried out in partnership with K&M McLoughlin for Thames View primary school in Barking.

The decorating project was part of the college's Aspire programme, through which learning companies are being established within each curriculum area to address the issue that not all young people have the opportunity to be working while studying.

We know it's not just about providing our students with a qualification, it's about offering a whole range of real work learning and other employment skills that help them create their own future.

Cathy Walsh OBE, Principal and CEO, Barking and Dagenham College

Thames View primary school approached the college for a cost effective solution to redecorating their school building. K&M already had a positive relationship with the college's Business Engagement Manager who brought them in as a commercial partner to bid for the project.

With support from K&M, the students bid for and won the contract to redecorate the school over a five-week period. K&M held the contract, supplied resources and provided overall project management. Profit from the job was apportioned across the team which comprised three students and four K&M employees.

Two of the three students went on to become K&M apprentices. K&M McLoughlin is now in discussions with the college about how to develop the partnership to provide cost-effective solutions for domestic and commercial projects while equipping other young people with employability skills to succeed in work

8 Newlands Girls' School – embedding an employability ethos



Newlands Girls' School (NGS) is a secondary comprehensive school based in Maidenhead. NGS aims to encourage and inspire pupils through a comprehensive programme of Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG). Developing employability skills is not just an add-on but a golden thread, weaved throughout the school's leadership and governance, curriculum and the skills and knowledge that pupils acquire throughout their education.

Leadership and governance

NGS has a dedicated careers coordinator who plays an important role in brokering connections with local businesses and secured the role of National Careers Week 2015 Regional Ambassador. The school also has an employer governor who links with careers and takes a more strategic role. They have participated in careers events, including a Year 11 mock interview day.

Employability within the curriculum

NGS is passionate about embedding employability throughout the school curriculum and extra-curricular activities, involving employers of all sizes across subjects and year groups.

Alison Oswald, a hair and beauty consultant based in Henley on Thames, participated in the Year 12 careers conference where she talked about running her business. Alison welcomed the opportunity to network and develop her presentation skills while inspiring the girls and bringing business to life.

Employability activities:

- drop-in careers surgeries
- mock interviews and help with CVs
- work experience, offered in Years 10 and 12
- careers days – annually in each year group
- National Careers Week
- student debates, e.g. university vs apprenticeships
- NHS careers competition
- selection of careers house captains
- small group careers advice sessions
- careers conference and fairs.

The Handmade Cake Company in Maidenhead opened its doors to pupils showing how they have grown out of the kitchen of one lady to a company of 140 employees, producing and delivering handmade cakes to businesses across Europe and the Middle East.

Year 11 students visited local SME **Print Direct** to learn about lithographic and digital printing processes and what it means to run a small business.

Resource Productions, a Slough-based micro firm, participates in NGS's careers days and employer fairs. Resource Productions enables young people to learn and experience the art of film making by teaching them production techniques and supporting young people to make their own films on social issues. Activities also encourage a range of employability skills including teamwork and communication skills.

Resource Productions is a social enterprise working with young people from all social backgrounds including hard-to-reach young people and those at risk of exclusion. Three of the team of six are apprentices. In 2013, the firm set up Resource Youth Film - a charity run by young people for young people aged 11-25 with a passion for film.

Initiating links with schools and colleges is challenging for such a small firm. Connections are often made through young people attending the charity's film club. Where schools have a dedicated careers coordinator, the firm is more likely to establish meaningful, longer term links.

Employability skills and knowledge

From Year 7 onwards all students have the opportunity to take part in one-to-one mentoring, and support is also targeted at vulnerable pupils or pupils at risk of becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training). Support focuses on developing pupils' aspirations and linking this to their career plans. Referrals are made to the careers coordinator or agencies such as ElevateMe⁸.

Newlands Girls School hosts a main careers website, a dedicated careers website for sixth form students and has a careers section in the main library. These resources provide a wealth of information for students, parents and employers on sectors, gap years, university options and alternatives to university⁹. Careers information is also displayed throughout the school.

Building on the school's house system, careers captains take an active role in raising awareness of careers resources, promoting employability to other students and providing support to the careers coordinator, which involves gaining first-hand event management experience.

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⁸ <http://www.elevateme.org.uk/>

⁹ <http://www.ngscareers.co.uk/index.htm> <http://www.newlandssixthform.co.uk/>

9 Opportunities to Inspire – a strategic approach to education-business links in Oxfordshire



It is imperative that we 'bridge the gap' between schools and our business community and build on the great Education Business Links (EBLs) that are already occurring in Oxfordshire.

Adrian Lockwood, Chairman, Oxfordshire Skills Board and board member of Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

O2i, Opportunities to Inspire, is an Education Business Link (EBL) organisation being developed as part of a new strategic approach to support young people in Oxfordshire in their transition from school into work. O2i will offer practical solutions to address local issues, such as a lack of employability skills among school leavers, and raise awareness of local training and career opportunities.

Background

Oxfordshire Skills Board, on behalf of Oxfordshire LEP and in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council's Economy and Skills team, undertook detailed analysis to identify gaps in Oxfordshire's skills infrastructure and priorities for action to meet future skills demand. The skills needs analysis informed the development of Oxfordshire's skills strategy which contains several key aims:

- To develop an integrated service to support young people in their transition from school into training, further education or employment.
- To raise young people's awareness of career options, local labour demand and the training path to succeed in their chosen careers.
- To increase the number of apprenticeship opportunities, particularly those offered by small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).

Collaborative Insights was commissioned to undertake independent research to explore the nature of EBLs in Oxfordshire. They recommended that a new, proactive organisation, representing all stakeholders, be established to meet the need for closer connections between employers and educators. Partners across Oxfordshire are now taking this forward through a new initiative called O2i, Opportunities to Inspire.

O2i aims:

- transform careers and enterprise education
- help young people make informed choices about their next steps and to set their ambitions in the realistic context of the world of work
- make it easy, rewarding and attractive for volunteers from business to get involved and give them a valuable experience
- ensure O2i interactions become integrated into the school approach to learning
- contribute to Oxfordshire growth.

O2i principles:

- **face-to-face** interactions between volunteers from business and schools / young people
- **time not money** - O2i business volunteers are not paid
- **right opportunities** – O2i will identify approved interactions or work through approved delivery partners
- **expectations managed** – interactions will be flexible, appropriate, clear to understand, based on best practice
- **outcomes assured** – interactions will evolve from feedback and evaluation
- **embedded into curriculum** – interactions must become integrated into the schools curriculum to be sustainable.

O2i as a creative solution

O2i will bridge the gap between the worlds of work and education in Oxfordshire, ensuring integrated EBLs across schools, employers, parents, students and other EBL organisations.

Volunteers from Business (VFB) will be encouraged to register for an account on the O2i website giving them access to EBL opportunities advertised by local schools.

Participation is flexible – giving as much or as little time as the employer feels able – but must be in keeping with the O2i principles. All VFB will receive training before undertaking an O2i activity.

Impact to date

While it is too early to measure the impact of O2i, over 80 attendees attended the official launch in December 2014 and the Think O2i Friday email bulletin is distributed to over 200 contacts.

During 2015 further work will be undertaken to increase stakeholder engagement to deliver a fully developed and widely recognised service by the end of 2015 – watch this space.

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10 Slough Aspire



Slough Aspire is an innovative new private-public sector led social enterprise designed to help the local community develop the right employability skills to meet the needs of Slough companies now and in the future, and to work with employers to develop the skills of their existing workforce.

The initiative brings together organisations that are responsible for the education, training and development of the Slough community to work in a more collaborative and coordinated way with local businesses to enhance provision of support.

Slough Aspire is business led, developed by SEGRO and backed by a network of business supporters including: Mars, O2, UCB, Lonza, Polycom, Arvato, Kier, the Federation of Small Businesses, Slough Business Community Partnership, East Berkshire College, Learning to Work, Lynch Hill Enterprise Academy and Slough Borough Council.

Slough Aspire consists of three main delivery strands:

- **Aspire for Schools** led by Learning to Work
- **Aspire for You** led by Slough Borough Council
- **Aspire for Business** led by East Berkshire College.

Key successes of the Slough Aspire initiative so far include:

- engaging over 4100 young people with business
- sponsorship of an annual careers event for Year 9 pupils in Slough
- working with over 140 organisations in the public, private and not-for-profit sectors
- delivering over 95 events, training interventions, skills challenges and networking meetings etc. for young people, local residents, entrepreneurs, worker-learners and local business professionals.

In autumn 2013, Slough Aspire opened the Aspire Centre, a learning and events space at the heart of Slough Trading Estate. A hub for business leaders, students, unemployed residents, budding entrepreneurs, teachers and community champions, the centre aims to enhance and strengthen links between the community and local businesses. Highlights include:

- **Insight into Control Technology:** 70 pupils from local schools came to the centre to build, programme and race robots in this event geared towards young people developing programming skills. A guest speaker from O2 gave an insight into digital career paths.

-
- **What's Work About?:** Over 65 young people with learning difficulties and / or disabilities participated in a hands-on skills event, which provided opportunities to try a range of employment-related tasks delivered by local businesses and training providers, for example, mixology with local micro business The Amazing Milkshake; and key cutting with Universal Security - a trading estate-based SME.
 - **Construction Futures:** Over 25 local residents, young people, construction employers and training providers came together to discuss the future of construction skills and learn about changes to the CSCS card scheme for health and safety in the building industry. Young people were able to network with professionals from the industry including Kier, Hays, Fusion UK, Morgan Sindall and Lovells.
 - **Get Motivated, Get Enterprising!:** Aspire for Business, in partnership with local social enterprise Creative Junction, welcomed 70 young people and local entrepreneurs of all ages to Aspire to find out how they could ignite their creative side during this event celebrating Global Entrepreneurship Week. Participants heard from VIP guest speaker Neil Clough, former BBC Apprentice participant.
 - **Osborne Bridge Building Competition:** 66 pupils from Lynch Hill Enterprise Academy took part in an engineering challenge set by SEGRO and Osborne Engineering as part of the drive to raise awareness and interest of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM). Eleven teams of Year 7 pupils spent a day with industry professionals who were joined by TV presenter and 'populariser' of maths, Johnny Ball, also a patron of the newly formed academy.
 - **Behavioural Insight Team (BIT) Employer Research Day:** Working in tandem with BIT – a Whitehall-linked team that applies insights from academic research in behavioural economics and psychology to public policy and services – Aspire invited a group of local young people to take part in a unique experiment. Following training on communication skills and networking, the young people visited 200 companies on Slough Trading Estate handing out information on apprenticeships along with biscuits made by students at East Berkshire College. The research aim was to evaluate whether giving a gift with information increases the likelihood of that information being responded to.

Slough Aspire is positive about building new partnerships and is a key player in the Elevate Slough initiative, responsible for employer engagement activities and providing a base for events.

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11 Tri-borough employability passport

The Tri-borough employability programme was set up to deliver a more joined-up approach to tackling youth unemployment. It seeks to reduce the number of people who become NEET (not in education, employment or training) and the time they spend as NEET, and increase the employability of young people leaving education. The programme will deliver universal and targeted employability activities with employers' involvement.

An outcomes framework was developed in consultation with employers which describes the activities that evidence competence in skills for enterprise, employability, professional conduct, motivation, positive attitudes and communication. Young people able to demonstrate completion of the framework are eligible for an employability passport endorsed by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), an employer and the relevant local authority.

The project is jointly funded by DWP and Tri-borough, which includes London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham (LBHF), Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) and Westminster City Council, the lead accountable body.

The total budget is £320,000 with £150,000 provided by DWP and match funded by the three local authorities plus £20,000 sponsorship.

A pilot project involving six schools launched in November 2013 following an earlier test pilot involving St Augustine's CoE high school (Westminster). The pilot project will run until November 2015 and aims to support 3500 students per year at an annual cost of less than £50 per student¹⁰.

An important aspect of the project approach is that each school receives a budget on a payment-by-results basis and, as commissioner, is able to use its funding flexibly to meet gaps in provision. This approach is fostering innovation, for example, Phoenix School introduced a BTEC Level 1 and Level 2 in work skills and Quintin Kynaston appointed an apprentice.

The approach is different using the business model of schools as commissioners, rather than us helicoptering in a programme.

Project Working Group Member

Examples of employer engagement:

- St Thomas More food matters project in conjunction with Whole Foods Supermarket – 14 students from Years 7 and 8 visited a working farm to select the fruits and vegetables needed to make jams and chutneys on a £30 budget.

¹⁰ The participating schools are: Fulham Boys College (LBHF), Phoenix High School (LBHF), St Augustine's Church of England High School (Westminster), Quintin Kynaston Community Academy (Westminster), St Thomas More Language College (RBKC), Sion-Manning Roman Catholic Girls' School (RBKC).

Students then participated in a marketing workshop at Whole Foods supermarket and a jam-making workshop with a winner of Master Chef. They went on to produce, market and sell their products to the public at the supermarket's market day.

- Pupils at St Augustine's CoE high school undertook a six-week intensive course in French before setting up a French themed café with the involvement of a small local patisserie and design business.
- Staff at Quintin Kynaston used local contacts to secure the opportunity for pupils to attend a dog grooming day, expanding pupils' understanding of different careers options in an imaginative way. A select number of students in Years 10-12 also spent two days at workshops at Barclays' headquarters in Canary Wharf.
- The three London Boroughs engaged their new supplier of facilities management Amey to sponsor the employability passport certificate through a design competition.
- Young enterprise company programme at St Thomas More – students split into two companies which they set up and ran. Weekly meetings take place with a professional business advisor from Hiscox and Mountain Warehouse.
- Fulham Boys College and Fulham Enterprise Studio have developed their portfolio of employers, establishing new links with Hilton Hotels, NewLine and Interserve. Work has been ongoing to develop a partnership with Mitie which will include involvement in curriculum development.
- Fulham Enterprise Studio specialises in construction and performing arts production and associated business enterprise skills. Students learn through projects with relevance to real-life work situations and through work placements. Each pupil has the support of a personal coach and works with local employers for up to two days each week to gain relevant hands-on experience.

Effort has been taken to integrate the programme with existing post-16 transition programmes and with the Tri-borough Education Business Partnership (EBP). Some schools have opted to buy back services from the EBP including work experience, careers fairs and mock interviews. In two schools the EBP is helping to broker and develop links with employers.

Feedback from young people has been overwhelmingly positive with pupils reporting greater understanding of the skills required to contribute to their future employability and broader understanding of different career options.

- **7154** young people have been engaged
- **3001** students are undertaking employability learning and experience
- **17** students have achieved employability passports.

(Figures at 31 December 2014)

A final report on the pilot project will be produced in January 2016.

Lorraine Downes, Young People's Education and Skills Manager,

Tri-borough Education Service, ldownes@westminster.gov.uk 020 7641 8743

12 University Technical College Reading (UTCR)

UTCR opened in September 2013 and delivers computer science and engineering courses to 14-19 year olds within a 15-mile radius of the campus. The College draws on expertise and resources from partners from within the computer science and engineering industries to help guide the curriculum, as well as engaging with local primary and secondary schools to help raise interest in their specialist areas.

UTCR Vision:

For our students to be inspired by the relevance and challenge of solving real-life industrial and community problems. They will rapidly gain the confidence and both the technical and personal skills to become the creative contributors on whom our businesses and public services can rely for shaping and driving the future of our society.

Joanne Harper, Principal

Approach to business-education engagement

The foundation of UTCR's curriculum is based on partnerships with local industry which are important to helping deliver courses.

It is not only large companies that engage with UTCR but small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) play a key part in this and are involved in various ways, including:

- The College encourages SME partners to sponsor BTEC units. The College aims to match each unit to a business partner whereby a partner can agree the unit content with the college in an attempt to match their business needs. The partner launches and delivers the unit, attends sessions to assess the unit and can offer mentoring or work experience opportunities as a prize for outstanding assessments.
- Tutors can collapse the curriculum for a day in order for partner SMEs to deliver specific activities, for example, a local SME specialising in database construction helped deliver a database building event for young people.
- Whole-college events, whereby SMEs can work on collaborative projects with other larger companies.

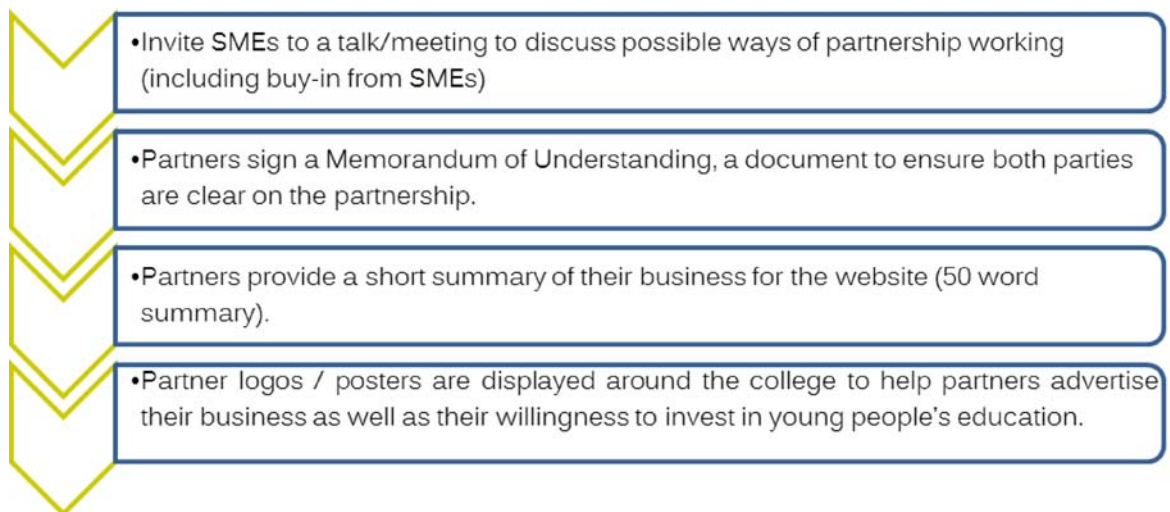
Key drivers of success

The role of a Business Development Manager is important to establishing, as well as maintaining, relationships with business partners. While local SMEs tend to approach the College to enquire about involvement in curriculum areas, the Business Development Manager is a key point of contact for enquiries, and is also proactive in attending local events to promote the College as well as visiting local businesses to encourage business engagement.

So many businesses are keen to engage with schools. Businesses are tripping over themselves to get involved... They've realised that there's a huge cohort of young people who won't be going to university and they want to capture them early... Apprenticeships have changed hugely over the last few years and attitudes towards them have too... The barriers are probably not having a key person in place to support engagement and for someone to ensure any engagement is optimal.

Business Development Manager

Process when recruiting new partners:



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Business Relations Manager, UTCR

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13 Wiltshire Skills for Success (WS4S)



A key challenge for Wiltshire's small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) is competition for STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) graduates and securing employees with higher level skills. WS4S aims to address this challenge by improving education and business liaison to help young people gain the basic skills and knowledge needed to make a successful transition into further education, training and employment.

Role model visits

Wiltshire has built up a successful role model network which provides one-off inspirational visits from businesses into primary schools offering insights into work. From over 65 primary schools, 2071 pupils have benefited from a visit since the programme started as a pilot in August 2012 and offered its full range of activities from April 2013. Of these, 748 pupils have received STEM role model visits.

Mentors from business

The position of the WS4S team within Wiltshire Council's Economic Development and Planning service provides access to existing links with employers and channels for recruiting volunteer mentors, e.g. working closely with Wiltshire Volunteer Centre.

Each mentor is enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checked and cleared before attending a bespoke training day and being paired with a school, college or NEET (not in education, employment or training) young person who they commit to working with for at least six months.

More than 300 young people have been supported through this activity to date. Around 20 STEM mentors from business have started working with young people since September 2014, providing one-to-one and group support. The next cohort of mentors is expected to start in April 2015.

WS4S is a flexible, tailored programme which SMEs can access and get involved in – whatever they can offer. Mentors to date include self-employed entrepreneurs, engineers, scientists, police staff, athletes and many more.

Careers Mark

Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Futures run Wiltshire careers Mark, a quality award for schools delivering high quality CEIAG (careers education, information advice and guidance).

Seventeen schools have received the Careers Mark to date, with four more expected by March 2015; the offer remains available for further schools to come forward.

WS4S are in early discussions with colleges to develop a Wiltshire and Swindon Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Employability Charter for Businesses and Schools. In contrast to the CEIAG-focused Careers Mark, the Charter will be a free, outward-facing recognition from businesses of effective engagement with local schools.

School entrepreneur programme

This programme aims to inspire young people to consider self-employment, discover what it takes to be an entrepreneur and learn the practicalities of running a business. Following a successful Becoming Your Own Boss (BYOB) workshop in 2013, which engaged 70 young people, eight workshops took place during Global Entrepreneurship Week and a further two in January 2014, supporting 164 students.

Wiltshire Careers Education Programme (WCEP)

WCEP is a free, interactive toolkit developed by WS4S / Wiltshire Council in partnership with Careers South West, Wiltshire businesses and secondary schools.

WCEP provides specialist lessons and curriculum for Years 7-13 covering: being enterprising, employability skills, what is an entrepreneur, STEM careers, apprenticeships and alternatives to higher education.

Employers have helped design the product and participated in delivering lessons. WCEP is being piloted with 16 secondary schools and Wiltshire College before being rolled out to remaining Wiltshire secondary schools.

Harry Deeming is the founder and owner of VisaPhotoIndia, launched in February 2014 – a company specialising in formatting and printing visa photographs for anyone travelling to India. Harry was discovered during a BYOB workshop in 2013 and went on to win Young Entrepreneur of the Year 2014 in the Enterprising Wiltshire Awards. <http://www.harrydeeming.com/>

Enterprise days

Enterprise days include careers and training fairs with local employers, ‘have a go’ mock interviews, CV workshops and roundtable Q&A sessions with inspirational role models. WS4S also supports schools and colleges to deliver their own in-house days by linking them with employers, developing ideas and providing extra staff capacity.

Individual resilience training

Delivered by Community First (Youth Action Wiltshire), this scheme is on track to support 200 NEET, or at risk of becoming NEET, young people by summer 2015. Participants are expected to demonstrate progression, with at least 65 securing a place in education, employment or training (EET). Support is targeted to young people with more extreme barriers where they receive resilience training, a progression opportunity, mental health and well-being support.

Key worker support

A targeted programme delivered by Community First (Youth Action Wiltshire) supporting vulnerable young people, including care leavers, young carers, young people with low attainment and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Of 107 referrals received, 96 young people were engaged and, of these, 76 per cent achieved accredited outcomes; 70 per cent entered an EET destination; 76 per cent recorded an increase in key skills; and 80 per cent an increase in self confidence. A new tranche of key worker support commenced in October 2014 and will run to March 2016.

The enterprise and innovation education programme (E&IEP)

The E&IEP aims to improve education and business liaison through innovative and tangible ways for employers and young people to work together with a specific focus on STEM skills.

Accessing the support available through Semta, the STEM Ambassadors Programme and existing links with the business community, at least 1250 young people will be supported through STEM fairs, the young entrepreneur schools programme, STEM role models / mentors and other STEM / enterprise activities including:

- 'show and tell' / 'have a go' experiences
- STEM development in teaching and CEIAG
- inspirational activities in STEM industries, e.g. life sciences and advanced manufacturing
- Q&A sessions with STEM role models
- stimulating collaborative and entrepreneurial education and business partnerships.

Laura Eames, Development Officer, Wiltshire Skills 4 Success Programme Manager, Employment & Skills, Wiltshire Council

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The **National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)** is a charity with a reputation worldwide for providing independent and robust evidence for excellence in education and children's services. Its aim is to improve education and learning, and the lives of learners, by researching what is happening now. Its authoritative insights inform policy and practice, offering a unique perspective on today's educational challenges.

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Influence – speaking with a stronger, united voice for South East strategic councils

Inform – producing robust evidence relevant to practice

Inspire – connecting people, sharing ideas, sparking innovation.

The group is chaired by Cllr David Burbage MBE, Leader, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. Members include: Bracknell Forest, Buckinghamshire, Central Bedfordshire, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Kent, Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire, Reading, Windsor and Maidenhead, Slough, Surrey, Swindon, West Berkshire, West Sussex, Wiltshire and Wokingham.

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ISBN. 978-1-910008-48-5

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