



Specialist Schools
and Academies Trust
THE SCHOOLS NETWORK™

Creating effective partnerships with employers: guidance for teachers

Foreword

The case for schools and colleges working in partnership with employers is compelling and has been at the heart of the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust's work since its foundation in 1987. An enriched curriculum which brings learning to life, improves and raises standards, and enables professional development for teachers and employees, are among the many and mutual benefits of collaboration between schools, businesses and the wider community.

This publication, produced by the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust in collaboration with the Education and Employers Taskforce, identifies the key characteristics of successful employer engagement. Through a series of case studies and suggested strategies, the publication will support classroom teachers as they identify and develop their own good practice. The aim of the guide is to encourage practitioners to create and implement their own vision for effective employer engagement, resulting in tangible benefits for individual learners. Further examples of good practice are available via the online resource at www.teachers-guide.org. More information on developing partnerships with employers can also be found on the SSAT website at www.ssatrust.org.uk

We hope this publication makes a major and practical contribution, as we work together to achieve the goal of every school and college enjoying an effective and sustainable partnership with employers. It is through such partnerships that increasing numbers of young people will receive the inspiration, motivation, knowledge, skills and opportunities required to reach their potential.

Elizabeth Reid
Chief Executive
Specialist Schools and Academies Trust

Introduction

This guidance is aimed at classroom teachers and provides information about how teachers can work effectively with employers in support of the curriculum. It provides ideas on how and where the expertise and experience of employers can be applied, the resources employers can draw on and the varying levels of support they can commit. It will also help teachers develop strategies for making contact with employers and enlisting their help and cooperation.

This guidance draws on the experiences of specialist schools and we have included a number of case studies to illustrate good practice. Further case studies and additional resources to support employer engagement are available via the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) website. The Teachers' Guide, produced by the Education and Employers taskforce, includes further information about how to make direct contact with employers and form a mutually beneficial partnership. www.teachers-guide.org

Background

For a number of years schools have been devoting considerable time and other resources to building links with employers. There is a strong feel-good factor which arises as a result, but the outcomes from links are not always commensurate with the input made. It is the quality of the teaching and learning experiences for students which is at the heart of all good employer engagement. By focusing on creating an effective partnership with employers, the outcomes for students can be maximised.

The generic term 'employer' is used in this context to refer to people from all types of businesses in the public, private and voluntary sectors, including large, small and social enterprises.



What is the rationale for working in partnership with employers?

The rationale for schools working with employers has four main elements:

- enriching the curriculum to improve motivation and raise standards
- professional development of teachers
- institutional development
- mutual benefits from collaboration between schools, business and the wider community.

For the purposes of this guidance we are focusing on how classroom teachers can work with employers to enrich the curriculum.

The main objective of teachers working with employers should be to support the aims of the curriculum, namely that all young people become:

- successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve
- confident individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives
- responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society.

All partnership activity should be connected with these aims and the Every Child Matters outcomes.

The underlying aims of curriculum partnerships with employers are:

- to raise standards of achievement of students
- to develop the employability skills of young people
- to provide young people with the opportunity to 'learn by doing' and to learn from experts
- to increase the commitment to learning, motivation and self-confidence of students
- to improve the retention of young people in learning after the age of compulsory schooling
- to enable young people to develop career awareness and the ability to benefit from impartial and informed information and guidance



- to support young people's ability to apply subject knowledge, understanding and skills
- to improve young people's understanding of the economy, enterprise, personal finance and the structure of business organisations and how they work
- to encourage positive attitudes to lifelong learning.

What are the benefits for teachers of employer partnerships?

Partnerships with employers benefit teachers by:

- helping bring the curriculum to life through showing how subjects are applied and valued in the workplace
- providing access to rich and varied learning environments
- enhancing the learning experiences and opportunities provided for students
- contributing to their professional development and management skills
- increasing their own job satisfaction.



- developing a wide range of social and personal skills and giving students opportunities to practise these skills in a real work context
- supporting the acquisition of business and economic understanding they will need to thrive in their future working lives
- helping them to become informed and critical consumers of financial services and to manage their finances effectively
- cultivating leadership qualities and encouraging self-reliance and the perseverance to succeed
 - stimulating and applying their skills for enterprise and employability, including the capability to handle uncertainty and respond positively to change
 - developing transferable skills and providing the tools to make appropriate decisions about their future and manage their career
 - promoting self-esteem and raising aspirations by challenging social and cultural barriers in relation to higher education and their career plans
 - fostering ambition and the drive to seize an opportunity and make things happen.

This has an impact on learning by:

- enhancing academic learning across the curriculum and providing a deeper insight into and understanding of subject learning
- encouraging students to be active rather than passive learners, so that they know how to learn rather than expect to be taught
- improving motivation by helping learners see the relevance of their learning in school to their future lives and the world around them
- stretching and challenging more able young people by enabling them to learn in new environments

Extended work experience opportunities are provided for students on the hairdressing course at Impington Village College in order to provide more vocational and work-related opportunities for students. Some of these placements led to part-time jobs and apprenticeships once the course finished.

What are the links to the national curriculum?

Curriculum activities involving employers are an essential element of provision for work-related learning and careers education. The direct involvement of employers has helped schools meet the statutory requirements for these two areas of the curriculum. Work experience, industry days, mock interviews and careers fairs have been common experiences offered to students as part of their career and work-related learning programmes.

The formal definition of work-related learning is:

Planned activity that uses the context of work to develop knowledge, skills and understanding useful in work, including learning through the experience of work, learning about work and working practices and learning the skills for work.

Society, Health and Development Diploma students from Gable Hall School have the benefit of having some of the course modules being written and taught by staff from Basildon Hospital, as well as being witnesses to a live open heart surgery operation via a video link.

Learning through work is about providing opportunities for students to learn from direct experiences of work, including developing the employability skills and 'can-do' attitude that employers value. For example, this could be through work experience or part-time jobs, enterprise activities in schools or learning through vocational contexts in subjects.

Learning about work is about providing opportunities for students to develop knowledge and understanding of work and enterprise (for example, through vocational courses and careers education).

Learning for work is about developing skills for enterprise and employability (for example, through problem-solving activities, work simulations, and mock interviews).

Teachers of all subjects have engaged with employers in support of young people's career and work-related learning. Using work as a context has helped teachers bring realism and application to their courses. Students are motivated by work-related activities, which help to connect learning to earning.

However, with the launch of the new national curriculum in 2008, further opportunities were introduced for employer engagement across the whole curriculum.

The new programmes of study within personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE): economic wellbeing and financial capability, at key stages 3 and 4, bring together careers education, work-related learning, enterprise and financial capability, and highlight the importance of the direct and indirect involvement of employers.

The government has announced that these new programmes of study will become part of the statutory curriculum for 11-16-year-olds from 2011.

Business studies students from Berwick upon Tweed Community High School are supported, both with initial and ongoing guidance and prime funding, in their own business ideas which range from an online homework platform to an event management team.

...what are the links to the national curriculum?

The new national curriculum also encourages all subject teachers to work with employers. All subjects provide opportunities for using work as a context and for involving employers. Some of the opportunities are explicit in the 'importance statements' at the beginning of the programmes of study. Reference is made to the relevance of the subject to young people's future economic wellbeing.

For example:

- 'In studying English, pupils develop skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing that they will need to participate in society and employment.'
- 'Mathematics is important for all members of a modern society...for its use in the workplace, business and finance.'
- 'Science...discover how scientific ideas contribute to technological change – affecting industry and business.'
- 'History...equipping them with knowledge and skills that are prized in adult life, enhancing employability.'
- 'Languages...the ability to understand and communicate in another language is a lifelong skill for education, employment and leisure.'
- 'RE...as an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning.'

Each subject aims to develop understanding of key concepts, several of which connect to the world of work and career-related learning:

- **Cultural understanding**
 - roles of people working in the field (art)
 - how products evolve according to users' needs (D&T).



- **Rights and responsibilities**
 - exploring different kinds of rights and obligations (citizenship).
- **Interdependence**
 - exploring economic connections between places (geography).
- **Capability**
 - applying learning in work contexts (ICT).

Likewise, connections are made in the 'range and content' section:

- Citizenship – how economic decisions are made; the economy in relation to citizenship.
- English – range of non-fiction and non-literary texts (e.g. journalism); different forms of writing (accounts, minutes, advertisements).
- History – impact of economic developments on world history.
- ICT – economic implications of access to and use of ICT.

And finally, in the 'curriculum opportunities' section:

- Music – work with a range of musicians.
- Citizenship – take into account economic dimensions of different political problems and issues.
- Design & technology – work with designers and makers.
- Geography – explore real and relevant contemporary contexts.

Teachers should examine their programmes of study to identify potential ways that a partnership with employers could be of benefit. They should also look for ways to link with other subjects and areas of the curriculum, as part of a coherent programme of employer engagement with the school.



So, teachers may be involved in working with employers in:

- specific lessons as part of a personal, social, health and economic education programme
- explicit, planned content in their own curriculum subject
- whole-school and extended timetable activities (e.g. enterprise days)
- specific projects and experiences (e.g. work experience).

What are the benefits to employers?

The development of young people's employability is the key benefit to employers.

Most employers do not need convincing of the social benefits of becoming involved in education. The primary reservations about engagement are more around the inefficiency of the processes and a perceived lack of time and resources rather than a lack of belief in the fundamental principle. Employers need to be assured that involvement in education can be a benefit to their business and not a drain on time and resources.

There are many reasons for corporate and individual participation in education, and studies have highlighted the range of factors that motivate and inhibit such involvement. Employers can justify their involvement on the basis of a clear business need. However, it is also important to recognise the motivational triggers that stimulate and sustain involvement. These are essentially personal factors, but often relate to company issues.

In encouraging employers to get involved in education it is important to get the 'marketing mix' right. What motivates one employer will be different to another.

All of the following have been shown to be important. It is by appealing to one or more of these motivations that teachers can encourage employers to get involved at some level.

...what are the links to the national curriculum?

A better prepared workforce – employer engagement creates a better educated and prepared workforce for the economic needs of society in both the shorter and longer term.

Fosse Way Special School prepares its students for work by each pupil undertaking extended work experience with Bath Hospital. This has improved the employability skills of the students and enhanced their progression opportunities.

Recruitment – involvement in education can provide opportunities to get to know potential recruits and to support skill preparation for the needs of their business. Partnerships help them to keep abreast of modern qualifications and developments in education.

Staff development – involvement in curriculum activities provides motivational and personal development opportunities for those members of staff who are directly involved with young people and their schools and colleges – through broadening their own perspectives, developing their communication and management skills and increasing their sense of responsibility, self-confidence, self-esteem and job satisfaction.

Business development – some partnership activities have direct benefits to the business – for example, through market research or real business problem activities, and the value from the work students and teachers do on placements. Partnerships with teachers can give staff fresh ideas and perspectives that can help deliver their business objectives.

Public relations – involvement helps employers to build a desirable corporate image at local level and, at times, at national level. It provides opportunities to contribute to local communities and to build links

which will enhance the profile and reputation of their own organisation and sector.

Employee relations – employees may feel more positive or loyal towards their employing organisation if it has a positive profile in the community.

A force for change – working with schools gives employers the opportunity to change the face of education, to affect the nature of the curriculum and to produce better qualified people.

An interdependent community partnership – business is dependent on the output of the educational system as customers, as employees and as suppliers.

The senior leadership at Bedford High School Business and Enterprise College decided to reinvigorate their curriculum by encouraging all subject leaders to establish partnerships with local community and business organisations, in return for the active promotion of the company's name on all the high school literature.

Working with young people – employers and employees can experience the enjoyment and satisfaction that come from working with young people, and the gratification that comes from seeing them learn and develop.

Individual creativity – curriculum activities (for example, designing a technology challenge for a year 10 class) can provide an outlet for individual creativity for employees.

Parental aspect – employers are often motivated to engage because they have children at the school, so their personal commitment is high.

What is meant by employability?

Definitions of employability vary but almost all are similar in practice. The UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) uses the following list, which comprises the skills that almost everyone needs to do almost any job.

- **Positive approach**
 - being ready to participate, make suggestions, accept new ideas and constructive criticism, and take responsibility for outcomes.
- **Using numbers effectively**
 - measuring, recording measurements, calculating, estimating quantities and relating numbers to the job.

Rather than teaching the year 12 Business Studies Recruitment and Selection Unit from the classroom, students from St Joseph's RC School visited Siemens, received presentations from the senior recruitment officer, had the benefit of using the company's real policies and paperwork for their studies and took part in a job application process, including being interviewed by Siemens' staff.

- **Using language effectively**
 - writing clearly and in a way appropriate to the context, ordering facts and concepts logically.
- **Using IT effectively**
 - operating a computer, using basic systems, learning other applications as necessary, and using telephones and other technology to communicate.

- **Self-management**
 - punctuality and time management, fitting dress and behaviour to context, overcoming challenges, and asking for help when necessary.
- **Thinking and solving problems**
 - creativity, reflecting on and learning from own actions, prioritising, analysing situations and developing solutions.

East Bergholt High School has a successful partnership with a local residential community centre, where all Health and Social Care students gain a vocational experience whilst enhancing their own employability skills, including effective communication with people who have mild and severe learning disabilities.

- **Working together and communicating**
 - cooperating, being assertive, persuading, being responsible to others, speaking clearly to individuals and groups and listening for a response.
- **Understanding the business**
 - understanding how the individual job fits into the organisation as a whole; recognising the needs of stakeholders; judging risks; innovating and contributing to the whole organisation.

The above framework corresponds to the functional skills (English, maths and ICT) and the personal, learning and thinking skills (independent enquirers, creative thinkers, reflective learners, team workers, self-managers and effective participators) embedded in the national curriculum. The qualities and skills needed for success in learning equate to those defined by employers as being essential for employability.

...what is meant by employability?

Subject teachers can engage employers in activities to develop employability skills in the context of their teaching, helping students see the relevance of academic and subject specific skills with their employability.



- **opportunities for reflection and integration** –learners, with feedback from staff, peers and employers, look at learning experiences and prepare to put them into action in other situations (*The Employability Challenge*, UKCES, 2009).

The importance of close contact with employers is stressed as a vital element of employability programmes. It isn't just about work placements, or visits to the workplace – it can involve working with them to create environments and practices in the classroom which reflect the workplace and support employability.

Regardless of how employability skills are defined, the important issue is how to develop them and, in the context of this guidance, the role of employers.

Research undertaken by the UKCES points to the core of developing employability skills to be:

- **experiential action-learning** – using skills rather than simply acquiring knowledge, with an emphasis on trial and error and a focus on the pay-off for the learner in employment and progression
- **work experience** – preferably work placements, but otherwise classroom experiences that simulate the complexity, ambiguity, unpredictability and consequences of success or failure present in the workplace

190 students from Greendown Community School took part in a day focused around engineering, in order to support their KS4 choices, where they worked with staff from npower and an educational company. Tasks included providing enough electricity for a town, whilst keeping in budget, and making a catapult that could send a missile to a precise target.

What roles can employers play?

The development of employer links in schools has evolved over many years and employers have undertaken a range of roles in supporting teachers.

Employer partners of Hope Valley College liaise with the school through two forums; the BIG (Business Interest Group) Breakfast, held monthly, and the Specialist College Forum that meets three times per year. Both support partnership working to develop the school's specialism, that in turn supports the local community and shaping of the curriculum.

The DCSF-supported National Framework, promoted by the Education and Employers Taskforce, identifies where employers can best support the work of schools and colleges.

It covers:

- leadership and governance
- supporting the curriculum
- enterprise education and employability skills
- financial and in-kind support.

Examples of support that employers have given to teachers include:

- providing ideas, resources, materials and equipment
- giving access to company facilities, including laboratories and training facilities
- providing work placements for students and staff
- giving talks and masterclasses to students
- working with students on applied aspects of their courses
- advising and mentoring students
- supplying case studies and assignments
- working alongside teachers on curriculum development

- mentoring individuals or groups of students
- participating in simulations and role play
- acting as an audience for the students to present their work
- developing a work simulation based on their company or job
- acting as a role model and being interviewed by pupils
- giving students a design brief or 'real' problem-solving activity
- assessing students and evaluating activities.

The emphasis has often been on persuading employers to give their time to engage with students face-to-face, either at the workplace or in school. This is clearly very beneficial to students who can learn directly from employers. However, new technologies have opened up opportunities for employers to engage in ways that require less time commitment. Examples include e-mentoring, video conferencing and virtual visits.



Whatever the size and nature of their organisation, employers can play a role in supporting the curriculum. There are different levels of support they can provide, involving varying degrees of time commitment and cost, from simply providing information or donating surplus equipment to supporting work experience, enterprise days or business mentoring.

...what roles can employers play?

Employers can engage in the planning, implementation and evaluation stages of a curriculum activity and offer different levels of support, which can be classified as low, medium and high. For example, a low level of input would be to provide copies of company literature for student use, or respond to a questionnaire. A high level of contribution would be to be involved in the planning, delivery and evaluation of an enterprise day. Any partnership with an employer normally starts with engagement in a single activity, probably at a low level of input. Not all employers have the time and resources to offer high levels of support, but some will start to feel able to raise their level as they become long term partners.



- **high**
 - part of learning team
 - suggest ideas and help with design.

Implementation

- **low**
 - talk to class
 - act as an audience for presentations
 - show pupils around site
- **medium**
 - be interviewed by pupils
 - discuss site visit with pupils
 - take on a role in a simulation
- **high**
 - work with small group as part of teaching team
 - assess students' work.

Evaluation

- **low**
 - complete post activity questionnaire
- **medium**
 - discuss project with school
- **high**
 - help with design of evaluation instrument
 - seek data from other employers
 - write detailed report with teachers.

Examples of levels of support from employers:

Planning activities

- **low**
 - complete questionnaire
 - agree to request for site visit
 - send brochures and company information
- **medium**
 - discuss needs of employers
 - identify specific goals
 - provide feedback on proposed programme

Park View Community School works with one key employer, Durham County Cricket Club, to support their Business and Media courses. Students have use of their Sky TV studio, radio station equipment, international media centre and 25 computers and 18 Apple Macs, supported by the ground's educational team.

How can teachers ensure quality?

Any curriculum activity involving employers should start with clear aims and objectives. As mentioned previously, the curriculum has three broad aims.

To enable all young people to become:

- successful students who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve
- confident individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives
- responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society.

These aims relate closely to the five outcomes of Every Child Matters and should inform the planning of all activities with employers.



When considering potential engagement, teachers should consider these key sets of questions for curriculum design and implementation:

- **What are you trying to achieve?** Are there clear links with the school's programme of career and work-related learning? What are the benefits to employers?

St Joseph's Roman Catholic School supports employer partnerships by ensuring that all staff take part in an industry placement day. This results in improvements to teaching and learning and originated from clear evidence of raised student achievement, attendance and enjoyment when learning involved real life contexts.

- **How will you organise the learning?** How will you involve employers, their staff and workplace in the learning? What support will be required for partners working with the school? What safeguards and checks will have to be made? Are the activities and learning outcomes clearly defined for employers?
- **How will you know you have achieved your aims?** How will you involve employers in the evaluation process? Will employers be involved in assessing students? How will the contribution of employers be monitored and evaluated? How will you provide feedback to employers?

In addition, it is important to recognise that some employers find the prospect of standing in front of students daunting. There is a real fear of failure, borne out of their assumptions about teaching and their memories of being at school as children. Assuring the employer that she or he will not be left alone in a 'lions' den', and that they will be well cared and catered for, is part of the engagement process.

How can employers be recruited?

Use your own school's business sponsors and networks to make or strengthen links, or approach your local education business broker. For most activities, your local education business partnership organisation (EBPO) is likely to be the first port of call. EBPOs exist to help schools and colleges work with employers. Most secondary schools already work with an EBPO, or you can find your local broker from the Institute for Education Business Excellence website: www.iebe.org.uk

Ridgewood School is being supported by many local employers, including AESSEAL, who is supplying the school with CAD/CAM software and their expertise to support the school's specialisms in engineering and applied learning. They see that the school can provide their local workforce of the future.

Brokers have expertise in reaching and talking to employers, and will be able to address many practical concerns, including CRB checks, health and safety and employers' liability insurance when children or young people visit an employer's premises.

In some cases teachers may wish to approach employers directly. Schools often establish links through ex-students, parents, governors, teachers on placements, teachers visiting students on placements, and other local community contacts. There is no one strategy for successfully approaching companies.

Usually, if the approach is clear, concise and professionally carried out, it is likely to receive sympathetic consideration.

All schools in the County Durham area take part in the Future Business Magnates competition, where each school enters a team of year 8 learners who complete a series of business challenges.

To recruit employers, teachers need to be persuasive and aware of the reasons why companies are willing to get involved. Before making a request, it is important to think about the potential benefits for the company and the advantages of working with the school. It is helpful to be sure about the level of commitment expected from the employer, but also to be prepared to be flexible, giving them choices of low, medium or high levels of input.



There are three stages in making contact with an employer and getting their commitment.



Gaining entry:

- Research the organisation to be approached – an employer is more likely to be impressed by someone who has taken the trouble to find out some background information. Recent news items on the organisation are also worth mentioning.
- With a large organisation, a contact within the HR or training team may be a good route in, but requests to senior company representatives are often more likely to yield results.
- If you are outlining a request by phone, draft a script before you begin.
- Know the name, title and organisation of the person being contacted.
- Confirm what you propose to do by letter or email.
- Give a date and time when you will ring to make an appointment to meet with the employer to discuss the proposal.
- Make sure names of people and the organisation are spelt accurately with correct job titles.
- Tell them something about yourself and the school. Take or send information to leave with them.
- Be brief, clear and business like.

Making the case:

- Focus on the potential benefits to the company.
- Identify the aims and objectives of the planned activity.
- Be very clear about the learning outcomes for the activity.
- Explain what you require from them, including the time commitment.
- Check understanding and allow time for questions later.
- Take the time to understand the employer's needs and constraints.
- Anticipate objections and suggest some solutions for getting around them.

Action planning:

- Agree actions and the dates for completion.
- Write to confirm any decisions reached and arrangements made.

Year 9 students from Archbishop Holgate's School who have a keen interest in science take part in annual problem solving projects, such as 'out on a limb' and 'how to make light bend around corners', supported by the staff and facilities of Smith and Nephew.

- A common theme in the creation of successful partnerships is dialogue. Involving employers works well when it is based on a genuine wish to listen to and inform the employer and a desire for long term engagement and relationship building. There should be a mutual commitment to work through differences of opinion and misunderstandings. Building a partnership, based on mutual benefit, takes time but is worth the investment.

The Teachers' Guide, produced by the Education and Employers taskforce, includes further information about how to make direct contact with employers and form a mutually beneficial partnership. www.teachers-guide.org

Case studies

Ashfield School

Type of school/college	Community comprehensive 11-18, 2642 students on roll. Specialisms in technology and applied learning. Language college and training school.
Location of school/college	Nottinghamshire.
Learners involved	28 IT students, from years 12 and 13, were involved as part of their A level studies.

Employer details

Charnwood Training Consultants: hospitality and catering trainers and the company which runs the bistro in the Ashfield site.

RAC, which has a national training base on the school site.

Objectives of partnership with employers

- for all learners to experience real and relevant opportunities that involve them learning directly from employers to best prepare them for the 21st century workplace
- to support the economic regeneration of the Ashfield area
- to develop purposeful and high quality assessment opportunities in IT
- to develop synergy between employers and across subjects on the school site.

Synopsis

Students undertaking ICT courses were given a project brief by an employer working on the Ashfield site.

Engagement activity in detail

- ICT delivery staff understood that a 'real' brief would improve the standard of student outcomes and decided to obtain these from the school's employer community.

- Regular meetings were initiated and held with employers and processes and protocols for the curriculum, along with the level of assessment support that the employers currently working on the school site could offer, were agreed.
- The task was explained to ICT students who then approached businesses to set up initial meetings out-of-school hours to negotiate and arrange a brief. Students followed the process through, developing plans, storyboards and mock ups. Their ideas were fed back to employers until the student work was approved.
- The students then produced their final versions of either the company website for Charnwood or a DVD for the RAC; some focused on the wider work of the RAC, whilst others provided options support for year 9 students.
- Throughout the process, the activity was supported and evaluated by employers, and it ended with a formal presentation to the customer – the employer.

Year 10 students from Ashfield School work with Lyndsey Fidler, owner of Angels Carrying Savage Weapons, who delivers their textiles course. The husband and wife team have their business premises on the school site and are sometimes visited there by the stars for whom they design and make clothes. They bring this current and direct business context and expertise to their teaching of the students.

Benefits to employers

- The students' concept of an online ordering service on the official company website was implemented – providing a cost-cutting mechanism by eliminating the need to speak to a consultant.
- The employers have been provided with much better opportunities to see how the school operates and how the learners, their prospective employees, are taught and acquire skills.
- The employers were able to provide a real context and be involved in an assessment opportunity that does not only rely on teachers
- Each employer was able to build links with another employer on the site whilst working on the same project.

Impact on student and school development

- Students are better prepared for employability whilst working on a real task: understanding of timescales, need for initiative, ICT specific skills and personal presentation and communication skills were all honed.
- There was an increased uptake of students opting for ICT, partly due to increased opportunities to work in real contexts.
- Student achievement increased across the board but particularly at high level grades.
- There was an increased knowledge of other subjects available on the school site.



Find out more

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...case studies

Carterton Community College

Type of school/college	Comprehensive 11-16, 711 students on roll. Specialism in engineering.
Location of school/college	Oxfordshire, semi-rural.
Learners involved	All year 7.

Employer details

Joint Air Delivery Test and Evaluation Unit (JADTEU), RAF Brize Norton, Carterton, Oxfordshire – a highly specialised unit responsible for the delivery of equipment and personnel in support of the UK's military operations.

Objectives of partnership with employer

- to provide building blocks for year 7 learning in physics
- to introduce learners to the concept of the school being a part of their community
- to challenge and engage new learners so that they enjoy and achieve in science and the whole curriculum.

Synopsis

As part of the seven week introductory unit to science, all year 7 students worked with JADTEU to produce a cradle and parachute that will protect the descent and landing of an egg.

Engagement activity in detail

- Students were taught about RAF Brize Norton in order to provide the local community and real life context for their work.
- They were taught the relevant scientific formulae to understand what was needed: types of forces; weight; mass and how they behave, and then provided with opportunities to test, measure, analyse and evaluate these. Some of this learning was delivered by staff from JADTEU.
- Using all the information learnt, students built their own cradle and parachute and tested their effectiveness in keeping the egg unbroken when dropped from the gantry of the JADTEU hangar.

Benefits to employer

- A PR opportunity.
- Some employees were parents of some of the learners, providing increased commitment and interest by Brize Norton staff.
- Providing specific support in a subject that is key to the armed forces, adding value to students' learning and appreciation of the subject.



Impact on student and school development

- Students were given the opportunity to see science and engineering in action, in a real life context. Enthusiasm for STEM subjects was enhanced.
- Students' end of module assessment figures were improved in all but the highest target levels, with many pupils able to use scientific terms confidently and see them in context, e.g. up thrust, gravity, absorption.
- Students understood their own community in greater depth, including what it was like to work at the base and be inside the aircraft.

Find out more

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Chafford Hundred Campus Business and Enterprise College

Type of school/college	Urban comprehensive 11-16, 824 students on roll. Specialisms in business & enterprise and applied learning. Trust school.
Location of school/college	Grays, Essex.
Learners involved	150 year 10 students.

Employer details

Various local employers from many different sectors and of different sizes.

Objectives of partnership with employers

- to make education more relevant, practical and motivational
- to support the needs of the local community
- to provide specific support for students Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG).

Synopsis

Every year 10 pupil undertook an internship placement each Friday throughout the year in order to have a more focused work experience in a particular sector.

Engagement activity in detail

- In year 9, all students received considerable CEIAG, including a careers fair, careers day and other activities as support for the types of internship placements that they would like to experience in year 10, as well as helping them to decide which of the potential 45 options to choose.
- As part of the three year KS4 curriculum, every year 10 student attended an internship every Friday, with a different employer in each term. Where appropriate, some students attended internships on more days as part of personalising the curriculum.
- The first and last Friday of each term were spent in school, where students received careers and PHSE input from businesses and other external sources.
- The internship programme was supported by teachers who undertook CPD placements with businesses and through trips, workshops

and presentations provided for students by employers. The school also had some opportunities for apprenticeships in ICT and office work.

Benefits to employers

- A better prepared local workforce, with improved examination results but also improved employability skills.
- Access to the new workforce each year.
- Opportunities for their own staff development.
- Community integration: the internship providing very different opportunities for relationship building for both staff and students.

Impact on student and school development

- Considerably improved examination results and CVA for all subjects including English and maths. In 2009, the improved opportunities for students were confirmed by the school being shortlisted for TES secondary school of the year.
- Students' improved employability skills, including raised confidence levels and other transferable skills.
- Students' wider motivation and aspirations raised, as proved in examination results.
- Students who participated have a better understanding of their local community and employment opportunities.
- Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) figure reduction to 0% for the last three years.

Find out more

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...case studies

Manchester Academy

Type of school/college	Academy 11-19, 850 students on roll. Specialism in enterprise.
Location of school/college	Moss Side, inner city area of deprivation.
Learners involved	34 students from years 7, 10 and 11.

Employer details

Pinsent Masons – an international law firm, ranked in the Global 100 and in the top 15 in the UK.

Objectives of partnership with employer

- to improve the literacy skills of year 7 students new to the country
- to raise aspirations and develop generic life and business skills of year 10 business students
- to increase the GCSE maths grade from D to C for a selected group of year 11 students.

Synopsis

Students from different year groups are mentored by Pinsent Mason staff in order to improve their literacy, numeracy and enterprise and employability skills and to raise aspirations.

Engagement activity in detail

- The employer and school meet regularly to plan, review and evaluate the programme, with all planning taking place one year in advance.
- Students for the year 10 business programme were identified and paired with a staff member from Pinsent Masons who acted as a mentor, with both parties committing to the programme for the full school year. This ensured a level of continuity and commitment to, and by, each student.
- Staff from all Pinsent Masons departments at all levels within the company were actively encouraged to, and do, participate in the programmes. They have regular recruitment drives and the corporate responsibility (CR) programme is integrated into the staff induction process.

- The mentoring programme operated with a mixture of visits to the school and sessions held at Pinsent Masons' offices.
- Business focus activities included:
 - CV writing
 - interview skills/techniques
 - business planning
 - presentation/pitch skills
 - running a small business
 - team building, linked to support from RAF
 - business lunches
 - dragons' den
 - celebration dinner.
- The literacy and numeracy programmes operated with dedicated pools of volunteers who attended the school on Tuesdays and Wednesdays each week during term time for literacy and numeracy sessions.

Benefit to employer

- The partnership work has helped to break down barriers between staff at Pinsent Masons, encourage greater interaction between staff and increase motivation and retention. This has been of particular value as the Manchester office is relatively new and is split across two sites.

- The purpose of Pinsent Mason's corporate responsibility programme is 'inspiring young lives' and the company's preferred focus is the education sector. This targeted approach is consistent with its business aspiration to be the leading sectoral commercial law firm, focused on the sectors in which its clients operate. Matching the purpose of its CR programme with this aim assists with the integration of community investment into its business and ensures sustainable partnerships.
- Employees have found their relationship with the school and its students rewarding, seeing the importance of helping to build confidence and enthusiasm as well as assisting with the development of core academic skills at first hand.

skills, including CV writing, applications and interviewing.

- Students' attitude to reading and learning improved and confidence in speaking and listening skills increased. In 2008-2009, 100% of students stated that they felt their reading was better as a result of the programme.
- Students' KS3 assessment in mathematics increased by one grade. In 2007-2008, Pinsent Masons' maths volunteers worked with three students who had average/good maths skills but the school felt that they were being held back by language barriers and lack of confidence and were capable of excelling. Pinsent Masons worked with these students every week throughout the school year and each of the students increased their results by at least one grade.
- The students showed a more positive attitude towards their learning and acquisition of employability skills as the year progressed. Each student is different, but whether it was an understanding of how to act in a professional environment, how to work in a team or building confidence to speak up in a group situation, all of the students have learned valuable lessons that will leave them better equipped for taking the next steps towards pursuing a successful career in the future.



Impact on student and school development

- Students' aspirations were raised and they were made aware of the opportunities that a higher level qualification can offer. Working on a one to one basis allowed each student to explore their own personal opportunities and focus on what they are interested in. This in turn has led to improved practical

Find out more

www.manchester-academy.org

...case studies

Northampton School for Girls

Type of school/college

Girls comprehensive 11-18, 1700 students on roll.

Learners involved

Specialisms in music and applied learning.
50 students from years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12.

Employer details

Northampton University Media Department
Chronicle and Echo Newspaper
Northampton Hospital paramedic team

Objectives of partnership with employers

- to develop cross-curricular and age range cohesion
- to link students' learning goals across their subjects
- to improve enterprise, work-related learning and employability skills through focus subjects by working with local employers in the field.

Synopsis

Students from different year groups worked with employers on a cross-curricular project focusing on health and social care, drama and media studies, culminating in the production of their own episode of 'Casualty'.



Engagement activity in detail

- The student media team prepared for the production day by visiting Northampton University, where they were taught how to storyboard, take still and active shots, handle a camera and edit a short film.
- English students prepared with the *Chronicle and Echo*, Northampton's local paper. Their journalist taught students how to case a story and produce a journalist report.
- Health and social care and drama students were trained in first aid by St John's Ambulance.
- On production day, a professional team of paramedics was present. The students consulted them to ensure that each scene was realistic and that any medical information or treatment was correct. All students had their role to play – from logistical organisation to acting in the film. Throughout, the different teams worked together, consulting the employers for advice and guidance whilst maintaining their own work schedule.
- At the end of the day all the filming was collected and the media team once again went back to the university where they made their final cut. The film is used in health and social care studies and has inspired other media projects. It is also showcased on the school website.

Benefits to employers

- The paramedic team were given the opportunity to highlight the importance of its work to the students and to educate them in first aid skills that could save lives, at the same time as supporting student learning.
- The newspaper was provided with a story and the opportunity of working with its local students and readers of the paper.
- The university had the chance to highlight the courses available and to break down barriers that may have prevented students from engaging with, and aspiring to, higher education.



Impact on student and school development

- Students' leadership, teamwork, communication, enterprise and work-related skills were developed.
- Students were given the opportunity to work across different year groups and to learn from each other – social cohesion and relationship development has made the school a friendlier place.
- Students learned about a wide range of careers available to them in medicine, media and journalism.

- The school's media team has gone from strength to strength, e.g. year 8 students have produced a film on how to use the school library for the new intake of year 7.
- Northampton University continues in its work to sustain the media team, which has led to increased opportunities to enhance their learning.
- The paramedic team has provided specific information and context for the society health and development students on aspects of their diploma course.

Find out more

You can view the episode of NSG Casualty on the school's website: www.nsg.northants.sch.uk

...case studies

Samuel Ward Arts and Technology College

Type of school/college	Comprehensive 13-19, 860 students on roll from mixture of deprived town estates and affluent rural villages. Specialisms in technology, visual arts and applied learning. Leading edge status and a designated training school.
Location of school/college	Haverhill, Sussex.
Learners involved	Student ambassadors who represent the student body.

Employer details

Various employers from the governing body

Objectives of partnership with employers

- to support the needs of the community as identified in the SEF
- to further develop curriculum provision
- to increase outcomes for students at all key stages
- to develop and embed student leadership
- to embed work-related learning.

Synopsis

Both student and staff leadership skills were supported and developed through working with employers from the governing body.

Engagement activity in detail

- All departments mapped work-related learning opportunities that enhanced the development of these, as well as their personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS), into their schemes of work. All students recorded when they had used these skills, reflected on what they had learnt and set themselves targets for future improvement.
- Student ambassadors were identified to be the face of the school student body. They worked with the employers who supported them on how to present themselves, including their use of voice and body language.
- Alongside this support, one member of the governing body, a management training consultancy business owner, worked with middle leaders and ASTs, delivering leadership and management training.
- The programme was quality assured by using the expertise and experience of the governing body.

Benefits to employers

- The employers gained the benefit of being able to access the views of the students directly by interacting with the ambassadors as the representative leaders of the student body.
- They had a direct impact on developing the potential future leaders in the local economy.
- Employers fulfilled some of their own community engagement targets.
- Enhanced public relationship opportunities for the employers on the governing body.

Impact on student and school development

- The student leadership initiative developed self-confidence, team work, communication and business related skills.
- The success seen has encouraged the school to broaden the opportunities for students to take part in focused leadership work through the Young Enterprise scheme and the Leadership Award being developed with the Chamber of Commerce.
- The staff involved exhibit greater self-confidence and are more willing to take on additional responsibilities; there is more leadership capacity within the school.
- This in turn has led to more curriculum initiatives and partnership activities in teaching and learning.
- Work-related learning is more high profile and has been embedded across subjects.

Find out more

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Sources of further guidance

SSAT

Additional case studies and resources to support employer engagement can be found on our website: www.ssatrust.org.uk

DCSF sites

14-19 reforms: www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19

Employers' site:

www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/employers

Diploma Employer Champion Network:

www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/decn

Work-related learning guide, work experience standards and national standard for EBPOs: www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19 then click Curriculum and Work-related Learning and Enterprise.

Functional skills support

The Functional Skills Support Programme (FSSP) is designed to prepare practitioners, leaders and managers to introduce functional skills in your centre, from developing applied learning to adopting a whole-organisational approach to functional skills implementation.

www.excellencegateway.org.uk/functionalskills

Education and Employers Taskforce

This is an independent, top-level employer taskforce to coordinate employer engagement in UK education. It has a useful website which includes guidance and case studies to help employers and teachers work together.

www.educationandemployers.org

The Teachers' Guide to Working with Employers, produced by the Taskforce provides:

- a one-stop shop for help with working with employers
- advice on how to contact employers and establish partnerships
- guidance that is suitable for all educational establishments
- comprehensive information on all the methods of working with employers: work experience, mentoring, school sponsorship and more.

www.teachers-guide.org

Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA)

Includes information about working with employers to support the curriculum.

www.qcda.org.uk

Diploma Support

Shows how education consortia are working with employers to deliver the Diploma (also useful for staff involved in different forms of 14-19 education, e.g. GCSEs).

www.diploma-support.org/resourcesandtools/insidework/ee

Institute for Education Business Excellence (IEBE)

The IEBE provides details of local, regional and national organisations that support schools in employer engagement.

www.iebe.org.uk



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