

The Castle School World of Work Newsletter



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It seems unbelievable that we are drawing to the close of another academic year. For the World of Work programme it has really been an exceptional year, where we have gone from more-or-less a standstill in terms of work experience, following two years of Coronavirus, to a full-on schedule stretching across all four classes at the Castle School Post-16. For a cohort of 34 students, we have put in place over 30 work placements and visits, a large proportion of which are long-term work experience spanning several months, which are hugely beneficial to our students.

We are particularly delighted that two of the students from our WOW+ group have gained permanent part-time work this year, following work placements - and when they leave us at the end of term will be continuing to build their careers in these companies, taking on increasing hours and responsibilities. This is exactly the kind of outcome we hope for, and we are very happy for them.

We could not do any of this without the wonderful employers who support World of Work, and we would like to say a heartfelt thank you to everyone who is involved. In particular we would like to thank the nine new employers who have joined our programme this year, offering work experience opportunities for the first time: West Berkshire Foodbank, Premier Inn, The Entertainer, Boots (Retail Park), City Arts, Yew Tree Garden Centre, Mrs B's Kitchen, Baydon Stores and Hobbycraft.

Congratulations to WOW+ student, Danny, who has gained permanent employment at Argos. Danny has a long-term interest in retail work and had previous work experience at Waitrose and the Co-op, where he demonstrated a great work ethic and customer service skills. He started a placement at Argos in October last year, and impressed the team there so much that they offered him some paid, seasonal work over the Christmas period. This soon extended to a permanent contract, working at weekends, plus Danny is often called in for ad-hoc work at other times. When Danny leaves school he will continue at Argos, and has the option to increase his hours and take up a Level 2 Retail Apprenticeship. Danny has done so well, and his achievement is testament to his hard work and can-do attitude. We wish him much luck in his future career.





We are so proud of WOW+ student, Laura, who has secured ongoing, paid employment at Premier Inn. Laura has had an amazing journey - she always felt she wanted to work in retail, but following work experience in both Waitrose and Sainsbury's she realised that the large store environment was not for her. She then went to Johnson's cleaners, where she loved the small team, and impressed them with her hard work. Last year we felt that this, plus her passion for cleaning and excellent people skills made Laura an ideal candidate for Premier Inn. Following some work experience, she was quickly offered paid work in the hotel restaurant. Laura was initially quite nervous, particularly in dealing with customers, but fast forward to this year and she regularly mans the "welcome pod", takes orders and payment, and is a key staff member. Laura has now been offered a 20-hours-per-week contract and the opportunity to progress to other areas of the hotel. Huge congratulations to Laura – this success is very well deserved.



Over the past couple of terms, another of our school-leavers – Becky – has attended work experience at Greenham Control Tower Café. Becky has worked in different areas of the café, helping prepare food, serve drinks, take payment and help customers. She has visibly grown in confidence over this time, demonstrating great customer service and team work skills. Becky has now been offered volunteering work at the café, at weekends, which will continue when she leaves school, and may progress to paid work. Well done Becky! We wish you all the best.



This term we have been delighted to re-connect with some of our previous employers, and re-instate work experience with them for the first time in two years. One of these is St Joseph's Catholic Primary School. Our student, Duncan, has started a regular placement assisting the Head Caretaker, Barry, with different tasks all over the school site. This is a fantastic opportunity for Duncan, as he is very practical and wants to grow his skills in this area. He also enjoys working one-to-one with Barry, who is really taking the time to develop Duncan's strengths and help grow his confidence.



Another organisation we are very happy to be working with again is the National Trust at Sandham Memorial Chapel. It has been great to get two of our students (Duncan and Marcus), out working with the regular team of volunteers, assisting with gardening work in the grounds. Both boys really enjoyed getting hands-on with digging and weeding, and they were able to provide some great assistance with the ongoing tasks to keep the site looking lovely. Thanks to the National Trust team for making this possible.



This term has seen the launch of the Art Hub Café at City Arts Newbury, and we are delighted to be involved with this initiative from the outset. City Arts is an independent community art hub, based near the City Recreation Ground in Newbury. It's aim is to provide "A friendly and welcoming place to learn, share, teach, collaborate and exhibit art". The café opened in May and our student, Marcus, has started a regular work placement, giving him a great opportunity to learn customer service and team working skills in an external environment. Marcus has also had the chance to use his own artistic skills to design a display / advertising board. This is a great collaboration, which we hope will continue long-term.

Where students have an interest or affinity with particular areas of the school, we sometimes offer internal work placements. This term, one of our students, Neah, has started work experience at our Love Lane site, in the Pastoral department. Neah has been assisting with administrative tasks, plus using her skills in empathy and understanding others to design a game, intended to help students talk about their feelings. Neah has displayed a great work ethic and ability to work independently and develop her own ideas.



Following the kind donation of a large number of Jubilee-related accessories from one of our partners, our WOW+ student group ran a charity sale at our Post-16 and Love Lane sites to raise money for the British Heart Foundation (the students' chosen charity). The group worked hard to price and sort the items and to man the sales over a number of lunchtimes. We were delighted to present the BHF with £104.38.





Thank you so much, to all the organisations who support "World of Work"

The Castle School will break up for the summer on Friday 15 July, so there will be no work experience until we return in September. We hope to be in touch with you then.

World of Work – Recent Participants & Supporters



We are continually looking for new organisations to participate in our World of Work Programme through educational visits, virtual / face-to-face meetings, guest speakers and work experience opportunities.

We would love to hear from you, whether you have worked with us in the past or would like to get involved with World of Work for the first time. Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you would like to find out more or if you have any questions:

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