

The Castle School World of Work Newsletter



Term: Autumn 2023

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Welcome back to a new academic year at the Castle School and the World of Work programme. We are looking forward to working with many of you again, and to getting to know better the new group of young people who have joined Post-16 this year. This has been an interesting half-term, with many students already out on work experience, and some great discussions with employers leading to new collaborations in the pipeline. We have also enjoyed visiting a number of careers fairs in the region, which offer a great opportunity for students to interact with employers, and are also a fantastic way for the World of Work team to make new contacts. Thank you to everyone who has been so helpful and informative on these occasions.

We would like to give special thanks to Newbury Racecourse, who provided complimentary tickets to Castle School pupils, staff and their families for their Community Raceday on 29 August 2023. Those who attended were given a private area to use, away from the crowds, and access to multi-sensory equipment and resources (courtesy of Rhino UK). They also met former National Hunt jockey, David Crosse, who provided behind-the-scenes tours of the Racecourse. Everyone had a great day, and we are very grateful to the Racecourse for this experience. We are currently in talks with the team about further, exciting ways we can collaborate across World of Work.



Last week some of our students attended the "Destinations Expo" careers event at Newbury College, put on by the Education Business Partnership (EBP). Our students really appreciated this opportunity to talk to different employers and organisations and to broaden their understanding of different kinds of careers and employers. The students enjoyed finding out information, seeing the company displays and trying out some of the interactive activities. Everyone we met was really welcoming and it was a great experience.

At the core of our work experience programme are the long-standing, regular employers who work with us year after year. We really value these employers and the fantastic opportunities they offer. Waitrose and Sainsbury's both approach this in different ways: Waitrose provides a rolling programme, taking a new student every six weeks and providing exceptional on-site support. This is the ideal environment for students who are taking their first steps into work experience. Sainsbury's offers in-depth placements in specific store areas, ideal for a young person who is further along their work experience journey, giving students the opportunity to really get to know the department, the work and the team. This term Zack started his first placement at Waitrose, and Troy is working in the crisps and bread aisles in Sainsbury's. Huge thanks to Sainsbury's and Waitrose for their commitment to World of Work.



Sainsbury's



Waitrose



Welcome and thank you to Cancer Research UK, at Newbury Retail Park, who have joined the World of Work programme for the first time this term. Our student, Katie, is loving her placement in the Cancer Research shop! Following previous work experience at Shoe Zone, she has discovered a real flair for retail work. The shop receives a large number of donations every day, as well as deliveries of new stock, so Katie is making a real contribution to the team, assisting with unpacking and sorting goods, displaying items in the store, hanging clothing and checking sizing. The team have been very supportive, and in addition to work experience, they have also welcomed a small team of staff and students into the shop to volunteer for their Duke of Edinburgh Award activities.

We are very happy to have returned to Yew Tree Garden Centre, where our student, Sam, is attending work experience in the plant area. He helps to sort out plant deliveries, which includes pricing, distributing plants to different areas, setting up pots with compost, and arranging plant displays around the centre. Sam works alongside the Yew Tree team, who are very supportive and get Sam really involved with a variety of tasks. Sam also helps out with general tasks around the garden centre, such as tidying and watering the plants and assisting customers.





One of our long-term World of Work partners is the Greenham Control Tower café. This is a great place for our students to experience a busy café environment, while working alongside a really supportive team. Our student, Sean, has made a great start there this term. The Control Tower team have been very impressed with how he has thrown himself the work. So far Sean has assisted with setting up the café in the mornings, including cleaning and arranging tables, setting out cake displays, setting up dog bowls. He has also been involved in serving customers and making hot drinks using the coffee machine. Behind the scenes, he has also helped with doing the washing up and unloading deliveries. Thanks to the Control Tower for this great work placement.

Another organisation we have returned to this term is Fair Close – a drop in centre providing lunch and activities for older people in Newbury. Our student, James, goes to work experience to assist with lunch service and has been learning a number of tasks and skills. He takes orders from the visitors, giving them the day's menu, and relays their choices to their kitchen. He then delivers the food to the tables and helps to clear up afterwards and set up for the next day. This is a great place for students to learn customer service and communication skills, and to work as part of a team. The on-site staff and volunteers are very supportive and welcoming and James works hard, and his contribution is really valued.



When appropriate, we try to provide internal opportunities for our students. One of our students, Amy, is very interested in working in office administration and she has had previous work experience at West Berkshire Council. To continue in this direction, we thought she could gain some really valuable experience in our busy school office, assisting the receptionist and the admin team. Amy has made a brilliant start, and has lots to keep her busy, including filing, photocopying, taking messages and resources across the school, and helping to sort out the library. The team have really welcomed Amy on board, and have been very impressed with her capability and mature attitude.

This term, two more of our students are attending work experience at Little Quavers Music in Thatcham. This is a drop-in music group for babies and toddlers, and their parents. The students assist with the music sessions, helping demonstrate songs and dances, preparing and distributing drinks and biscuits, and doing the washing up at the end. This is a lovely work placement, in a really supportive environment. The students work closely with Anne and Liz, who run Little Quavers, and have quickly found the confidence to participate fully, standing up in front of the group while the music sessions are running. It is great to see them blossom in this setting, and to see their growth in confidence and independence.

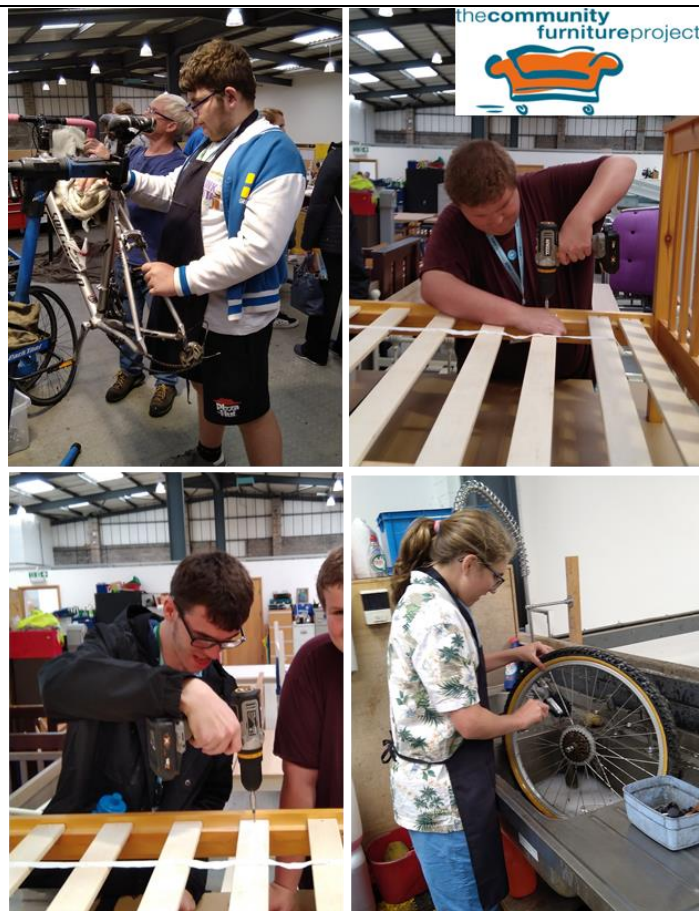


We are delighted to be back at the National Trust at Sandham Memorial Chapel, to assist the volunteer team with work around the grounds and gardens. The students have been reaping the benefits of some of their previous work – helping to harvest carrots, potatoes and pumpkins that were planted by the school group earlier this year. They have also helped with the apple crop – some of which were donated to school – resulting in a couple of delicious crumbles in the weekly cooking lesson.

We are very happy to have reconnected with the Community Furniture Project, who have offered us a weekly place for a small group of students to attend and learn practical skills in the workshop. The Furniture Project is an amazing charity, operating a furniture and household goods re-use service, taking donated items and overhauling and repairing them to sell on a low prices to the local community.

In the workshop areas, teams of volunteers work with vulnerable adults, and those needing support to teach them practical skills, such as repairing furniture and bicycles. There is a great team spirit, service users and employees work together, cook meals and participate in other community projects. Some of our students go on to attend the furniture project when they leave the Castle School.

The students have been loving their sessions in the workshop, and have been helping to assemble bed frames, and clean and repair some bikes. Thank you to the team for this opportunity.





Finally, as well as work experience, a significant part of the World of Work programme is spent in the classroom, teaching students about finding work, learning workplace skills and broadening their outlook. Recently, we have subscribed to some new Job Explorer software (JED), to help the students explore different jobs, and find out about some of them in more depth. The students have really enjoyed completing personal work questionnaires, and watching videos of real people in their places of work.

World of Work – Recent Participants & Supporters



We would like to say a huge “Thank You” to everyone who is, or has been, involved with the “World of Work” programme

The Castle School will be closed half term from Thursday 19 October, returning on Monday 30 October. There will not be any work experience between these dates.

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, if you would like to get involved with the World of Work programme. 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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