

World of Work at the Castle School

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A GREAT START TO THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR

Welcome to the first WOW newsletter of our new academic year. The year has got off to a flying start, with a number of students already attending regular work placements. We are fortunate to have ongoing support from some wonderful local organisations, who work with our students year after year. Without them we could not do what we do, so we are extremely grateful to them. We are also delighted that some new businesses have joined World of Work this year, offering fantastic opportunities for our students, in work areas that really interest them. Finally, we have had some great group events so far this term: A class trip to the Houses of Parliament, a regular care-home visit, and an in-class visit from a former student, whose work experience, ten years ago, resulted in paid employment that continues today.



THATCHAM COURT CARE HOME

We have recently started a brand new initiative with Bupa Thatcham Court Care Home: A group of our students visit on a regular basis, to spend time with the residents and participate in joint activities with them, such as singing, arts and crafts and cake decorating.

There is also scope for some students to progress to assisting with tasks, such as serving drinks and refreshments and helping out in work areas such as the kitchen or the laundry. This has been a great experience so far, and we are grateful to everyone at the care home for setting it up, and for giving us such a fantastic welcome. Initial visits have seen some really lovely interactions between students and residents, and genuine bonds being formed, through different types of communication. This is a wonderful experience, which is equally rewarding for everyone involved.

OCTOBER HALF TERM

The Castle School breaks up on Friday 24 October, returning Monday 3 November



GREENHAM CONTROL TOWER

Our regular employers form the backbone of what we do, offering our students incredibly valuable support, year after year. Greenham Control Tower Café is a wonderful example of this, and is a fantastic setting for work experience. Students gain an understanding of what it is like to work in a busy café, participating in a wide variety of tasks, both upfront and back-of-house, such as clearing and wiping tables, loading and unloading the dishwasher, storing deliveries, taking orders and serving drinks. This year, we have two students going to the Control Tower, on different days. They are able to start behind the scenes, helping with tasks where they feel comfortable, progressing at their own pace to a customer-facing role.



BILL'S RESTAURANT NEWBURY

This term, we are delighted to be working with Bills Restaurant in Newbury, for the first time. This has been put in place specifically for our student, who has a great aptitude for cooking, and wants to work in a kitchen. His previous work experience at the Fair Close centre has laid the foundations for this, and we are very excited that he now has the opportunity to progress to a popular, commercial restaurant. The restaurant staff have been really welcoming, and he had a great induction, where he learnt all about restaurant procedures, health and safety, and met all of the team. He was also delighted (and surprised) to be offered a huge plate of pancakes at the end of his first session!

AQUATIC CANINE THERAPY

We try very hard to match our students with work placements that they are truly interested in. So, we are very happy to be working with Aquatic Canine Therapy, based in Kingsclere, for the first time. They have joined the World of Work programme to offer work experience to one of our final year students, who absolutely loves dogs. ACT offers water-based physiotherapy for dogs, and our student loves working there, where she assists the team directly, helping to encourage the animals to exercise properly in the water tanks. This is great experience, as it not only gives our student the chance to work with dogs, but it is also stretching her team working and customer service skills.



GET INVOLVED

There are many different ways to be involved in the World of Work programme, and we are always delighted to hear from new organisations and to look at new ideas.

If you would like to find out more, please contact:

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NORTHCROFT LEISURE CENTRE

One of our year 13 students is hugely into all kinds of sport, and spends most of his weekends playing football. We are therefore delighted that Northcroft Leisure Centre / Everyone Active have created a work placement, introducing him to all aspects of work around the site. Our student works with the site team, in a variety of tasks, such as pool checking, cleaning and checking the gym equipment, general cleaning and tidying, reception work, and more. The team are really inclusive and supportive and he really enjoys going there every week. We previously worked with Northcroft several years ago, and it is great to be back.

PARLIAMENT VISIT

Earlier in the term, one of our classes visited the Houses of Parliament. They were given a guided tour around the House of Commons and House of Lords, and found out all about what happens when Parliament is in session, including how members use "Hear, hear" to show approval for a speech.

They were also shown some of the technical equipment, including the microphones. It was a really interesting day, and we are planning to send another class next term.



SHARED LIVES

One of our students spent most of the last academic year attending work experience at the West Berkshire Council Shared Lives office. He has become a firmly established member of the team, to the extent that he was invited to return this year, and now has his own desk, laptop and email account. He loves this placement, and assists the team with a variety of admin tasks such as printing, scanning, creating files and delivering post.

UGLY DUCKLING

Another incredibly supportive organisation, who work with us on an ongoing basis is the Ugly Duckling Pottery Painting Coffee House. This a wonderful environment for our students to learn teamworking and retail skills, and gain café and customer service experience. Our latest student loves this placement, where she helps to set up painting materials, stock the fridges and sweet pick & mix, and unpack and store deliveries.



WASING ESTATE

Wasing Estate offer us fantastic work experience, where students work alongside the gardening team on a variety of tasks. One of the students who attended last year enjoyed it so much that he asked to go back, so he has returned with another student from his class. So far this term, they have been involved with weeding, creating new flower beds, clearing the pumpkin patch and helping to construct a pumpkin carriage.

CAREERS FAIR

This month, all of our students attended the EBP's "Destinations Expo" careers fair, held at Newbury College. Before attending, students researched the organisations to see who they would like to talk to, and planned some questions. It was a great, interactive event, and the students enjoyed finding out about a variety of businesses and job roles. It was also a great chance to try out some of the interactive equipment and tasks, such as painting lines on the road, fitting together machinery and testing hi-tech electronic devices. It was a really useful and inclusive session, which has also given us ideas for further educational visits.



VISIT FROM A FORMER STUDENT

For our students, it is incredibly inspiring to talk to former pupils about their achievements since leaving school. So, we were very happy to welcome ex-Castle Waitrose employee, Sean, to Post-16 to talk about his job. This started 10 years ago, with work experience, followed by a work trial, and he has been employed by Waitrose ever since. Sean talked about his role and what it means to him, and how his job has changed his life, including learning to drive and buying his own car.



ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL

We are very fortunate to have a number of organisations this year, who are offering ongoing placements to students who are really established in the work and with the team. Another of these is St Joseph's Catholic Primary school, who provide one-to-one work experience with their caretaker. This long-term opportunity is not only helping our student to gain a great skill-set, but is really helping to grow his confidence and independence.



COMMUNITY FURNITURE PROJECT

The Community Resource Centre in Newbury is a fantastic initiative that trains people with disabilities in practical skills, such as repairing furniture and bike maintenance, and sells these items on to the public. One of our students has started attending the Furniture Project on a trial basis. The team are really supportive, and knowing our student's keen interest in trucks, have been involving him in carrying out site vehicle checks.



POST-16 ASSISTANTS

Where we can, we offer internal work placements, to help students grow confidence and skills before trying external work. Last year, a student worked as a Post-16 assistant, taking responsibility for keeping the kitchen / washroom areas stocked with soap and towels, and ad-hoc tasks such as litter picking. This year, he has progressed to a "supervisory" role, with another student.



THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO IS INVOLVED IN WORLD OF WORK WITHOUT YOU, NONE OF THIS WOULD BE POSSIBLE



GO TO THE WORK EXPERIENCE SECTION AT www.thecastleschoolnewbury.org.uk