

Meaningful Learning Experiences

Strategic Commitment	✓	Targeted aim of real experience for students
Curriculum Provision		
Employer Partnerships	✓	Relationship generation and management
Reflective Young People		
Informed Career Choices	✓	Students gain practical experience

'The Hive' delivers access to careers for SEN students with support from business

The Hive at Wilson Stuart Special Academy works with just over 20 students with special educational needs aged 18-25 with the aim of giving them the skills, experience and confidence to find a productive role in society. This can take the shape of a job, an apprenticeship, a volunteering position or other educational routes. For these specific students there is a commitment that they will all have work placements throughout the year, which will provide insight into the opportunities available for them.

This project delivered a range of over 40 work placements to the students through employer engagement processes and relationship management that has proven to be very successful for all stakeholders. Beyond this, business partners, staff and students highlighted the need for extra guidance in producing CVs, covering letters and in interview situations where students often struggled to represent their full ability. In response, HSBC have become a firm partner and delivered multiple CV sessions, provided feedback for the wider CV programme including some excellent peer review ideas and a jobs board representative of real local jobs. Students spent time developing their CVs with HSBC staff and gaining a better understanding of what makes a CV stand out. They are also providing in school practice interview sessions, which together with staff led interview workshops will give students far greater practice and confidence in interviews for work placements and subsequent jobs or apprenticeships.

As a brief insight into some of the work placements now offered to students:

Cookery School – where partially sighted students have gained fantastic practical experience and significant confidence in being able to achieve genuine tasks in the running of a real kitchen. This partner have agreed to work in the future with a blind student committed to learning about the industry.

Nursery – this placement has provided a safe, supportive and creative environment in which students can find a productive role and be part of the team in delivering high quality care. One of the nursery partners has offered a student an apprenticeship with them due to her excellent contribution during her work placement and her desire to learn more.

Local shop – which has provided an experience entirely akin to a real role and ensured the environment is a productive, enjoyable and supportive one. Many students have identified this as one of their favourite placements as the work is clear and achievable and the people a pleasure.

Major Retailer – who, as a partner have been incredibly generous, supportive and professional offering the students a real taste of a number of real jobs within their organisation. Larger partners are vital to this programme as they have a wider spread of jobs available expanding the horizons of students and building their experience further.

Impact on the Students:

- Every student has had a number of work placements giving them a broader experience of work and roles available to them. This improves their confidence, ambition and ability to find a fulfilling role in the future.
- Through the CV and interview programme students are able to represent themselves effectively and improve their ability in applying for opportunities directly.
- Through regular engagement with employers and staff, students are part of the community and continuously improving their communication, business skills and quality of life.

Impact on the School:

- The Hive has greatly increased its business partners and through doing so it's ability to offer students appropriate and varied work placements. There are now processes and increased experience in working with employers.
- Awareness of the school and its aims has improved within the local community facilitating employer engagement at all levels and enabling future relationships.
- In a relatively short time staff have become effective communicators, business aware and capable of generating and developing relationships – a skill set that is difficult to develop within a school but hugely useful.

Impact on the business partners:

- By improving the process and systems in place the experience for the business partners is clearer, more accessible and better managed. This reduces the resource requirements from their side and the value of their involvement.
- As the programme has developed, feedback from business partners has been used and acted upon to support staff and students in driving maximum benefit from their commitment and recognising the value of their contribution.
- With dedicated staff the business partners have a single point of contact and are engaged beyond the provision of training and work placements to be part of the school's activity in general. This gives the relationship greater strength and value for all business partners – and this is planned to increase moving forward!