

Case Study

School / College:	Beverley School
School / College Contact:	Karen Revill
Term/Year:	2019 - 20. Spring term

Activity that has taken place to date:

Activity: NCW- Mock Interviews with an employer Benchmark: 5. Employer engagement

At the end of the autumn term I was introduced to new employer Victoria, by our careers coordinator Janine. This was a particularly exciting and beneficial partnership opportunity as our school caters for a range of students, both children and young adults with Autism and Victoria is a successful local businesswoman with Autism, keen to build a relationship and to support our students with her insight, experience and further their opportunities for employer engagement.

During National Careers Week one of the aims was to focus on the development of student's individual employability and personal skills, developing self-awareness and critically, self-confidence. This was an ideal opportunity to enlist Victoria's help to support us with giving mock interviews given her business, experience and understanding of Autism. This would be an invaluable experience for Phase 3 students, some of whom were moving on to their next phase of education and training at the end of this academic year.

An interview can be a daunting experience for any young person but more so for those with Autism, who may face difficulties with communication and social skills which make this process and experience an even greater challenge. Prior to the interviews, in addition to skills coaching by school staff, the students were also given a preparation session with Wendy Gosling from the DWP to help them understand interview expectations and help prepare them for their forthcoming interviews: posture, dress, etiquette, skills and advice to demonstrate a good impression e.g. example questions to ask at the end, and what not to do / ask. For any student but especially for those with autism, they feel more motivated when they perceive the relevance of what they are doing. To make the experience more 'real' and individual students were given a 'real' job advert with a description of the work skills and expectations involved in a sector of work they had previously identified as of interest to them and aligned to their future aspirations. To explore their employability skills at interview the job adverts were written to cover responses to an expected range of skills and attributes such as: team work, IT skills, positive attitude, working independently, commitment and flexibility. Victoria was fully briefed and as such could craft her interview questions for each individual job, student applicant and skill set required. She gave careful and very insightful feedback to the students, emphasizing their strengths to boost confidence but also offering advice for how to improve performance. All students and Victoria found this of value and gave positive feedback about the process and experience.

Gatsby Benchmarks: (add detail around which Gatsby Benchmarks the case study highlights)

5. Encounters with employers and employees

Also

6. Experiences of workplaces: Work experience involving students doing real work tasks in areas they have future aspirations, developing valuable and relevant work and employability skills, experience and confidence

8. Personal guidance: Knowing their own strengths, areas for development and personal qualities. Providing a focus on developing employability skills in a supportive and way to look at strengths, personal qualities and the ability to accept and work on areas for development. Building students' self awareness, motivation and confidence and helping them to see how they can develop their skill set moving forwards

2. Learning from career and labour market information: Prior assembly from the employer as an introduction to her business help give students first-hand information from a digital technology employer helped student's understanding of areas of employment growth and how changing working patterns can help balance job demands, working life and the challenges of autism.

Impact: (What was the impact – number of students, employer engagement etc.)

Everyone was very impressed with the student's response to the experience their performance and that they also welcomed acceptance of advice on how to improve in future situations from a real employer.

Students were able to reflect and review what they had learned about themselves with maturity and relate this to the skills and responsibilities needed to preparing for an interview. They fed back that they felt that they had been well supported to help them respond and perform well when preparing for interview as part of what felt like a genuinely 'real' process. One student's feedback was 'it means more to me because I actually want to do this job as a career'

We communicate regularly with parents and they too gave positive feedback, some had helped with preparation and research for the job and all were very proud that they had taken part independently.

The intention would be that this process would generate two new work experience placements (from two of the job adverts and interviews)

Victoria is taking a student on placement at one of her places of work. A digital skills drop in center and Beverley school has a new student 'Porter' who will assist our Caretaker. This student has plans for a supported internship with the NHS, progressing to an apprenticeship and then employment as a Hospital Porter. This is a role aligned to his ambitions and will enable him to develop skills and experience for the future as well as being of genuine benefit as a role in our school.

During the follow up discussions and the NCW student led assembly for many a growing confidence was visible noted by their willingness and ability to talk about themselves and their experiences, their developing skills, future plans and ambitions.

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