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## Young Apprenticeship News

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## Ministerial visit heralds second cohort

News of this autumn's expansion of the Young Apprenticeship programme was announced as Ivan Lewis, Minister for Skills and Vocational Education spent a morning as the guest of Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Learning and Skills Council. At Jackson's Mercedes Benz in Poole, he observed pupils from Ashdown School, Poole, in action, before visiting Paragon ITE, the training provider, to meet the rest of the group undertaking the Young Apprenticeship in the Motor Industry. The Minister said, 'This is a historic step forward in our commitment to putting world-class Young Apprenticeships at the heart of our offer for 14- and 15-year-olds. It is exciting to meet gifted and talented young people who have chosen Apprenticeships as their first-choice option.'

With this year's initial recruitment of 1,000 Young Apprenticeship places complete, a second cohort of 2,000 14-year-olds will begin training under the scheme in September 2005, and there will be a new sector programme covering Apparel Manufacturing and Tailoring, Carpet Manufacture and Fitting, and Footwear and Leather Products.



Ivan Lewis, middle, takes a closer look with pupils and trainers on the Young Apprenticeship in the Motor Industry.

## Programmes around the country *Nottinghamshire – the Motor Industry*

EMTEC is the country's biggest provider of motor-vehicle Apprenticeships, with almost 5,000 learners, and is working very closely with Automotive Skills to develop good practice. John Wilson, Schools Liaison Manager at Nottinghamshire LSC, says, 'Providing the Young Apprenticeship programme is part of our local strategy to make high-quality Level 2 vocational provision available at Key Stage 4 in Nottinghamshire.'

The company has around thirty Young Apprentices from three schools, and has found that the perception of motor mechanics is an important issue. 'Some are really keen and they can see where it's going to go,' says Training Officer Mark Whittaker. 'Others are doing it because their mates are doing the course and they thought it would be easy, or that they're going to be let loose in a workshop with spanners and start taking cars apart. The perception

*is still that motor mechanics is a practical job, though it's anything but – it's a very technical job. With a split between theory and practice of about 70:30 it's important that students get the right impression before they choose the course.'*

The two dedicated trainers have tried a wide variety of teaching styles with their 14-year-old recruits. Mark says that age is a definite factor: 'I tend to draw a lot of parallels using bicycles and other things they're familiar with, like mobile phones and computers. And even though we make a point of treating them like adults, they didn't like the teaching room laid out in a horseshoe, with the trainer moving around in the middle. They felt very insecure like that and they mostly prefer the tables set out exam-style.'

Health and safety training is of vital concern in automotive settings, but

the challenge is to deliver it in an effective and engaging way. For post-16 Apprentices, EMTEC has developed distance-learning packages that can be worked through at home or at school, and the company is looking at preparing something similar for Young Apprenticeships in future.

EMTEC has found differences with younger learners when it comes to discipline and attendance. An older Apprentice will have a manager with responsibility for them and the power to deduct pay if necessary. With schools, the chain of responsibility can be more tenuous, especially since school staff also have heavy teaching burdens. 'Some schools will back you up, and follow through with pupils, but those which don't could have big problems in future as this kind of programme is likely to become fundamental for what they deliver.'

### National conferences – a chance to meet and feed back

The Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) is organising two one-day conferences this spring for Partnerships already involved with Young Apprenticeships or planning for the second cohort. They take place in Leeds (22 February) and London (2 March), and provide the chance to review lessons learned to date, discuss current and future issues, and feed back to the DfES, LSC National Office and Sector Skills Councils on experiences with the first cohort.

The conferences feature updates on national policy and early monitoring findings, plus sector-specific workshops and interactive sessions covering issues from management and legal topics to delivery models and teaching and learning with 14–16-year-olds. There are also question-and-answer sessions for new Partnerships.

## Programmes around the country *Hertfordshire and London – Business Administration*

In common with other Partnerships around the country, the tight timing for the first cohort has been an issue for The Thomas Alleyne School in Stevenage, with room on the programme for only 30 out of the 49 Year 10 students who had chosen Business Administration.

Before the programme started, the Partnership held a launch and information event for parents, and communications are set to continue by means of a regular newsletter. The Partnership format has worked well, with the local Chamber of Commerce organising the work placements, for example. However, Christine Macleod, Head of Business Education at the school, stresses that everyone involved needs to acquire knowledge of the other partners' fields in order to pick up all the different elements that come together in the programme.

The pupils at Thomas Alleyne haven't given up anything else to take on a Young Apprenticeship, and without a block timetable with triple and quadruple lessons, this approach would be difficult. *'When they go on work placements, they'll go in that time, and it won't impact on their other studies'*, says Christine. *'But I think this means there's good potential for*

*schools to specialise – if we specialised in Business Administration and another school specialised in another kind of Young Apprenticeship, then with block timetables we could all work together. At the moment it happens with the sixth form so there's no reason for it not to with the Young Apprenticeship.'*

Trainers from North Herts College deliver the NVQ training at the school, but the students recently had a day out using the college's own facilities. *'It's all very new for them'*, says Christine. *'I think they're having a lot of firsts. For example, when we went to the college, initially they couldn't believe that they couldn't choose their own groups to work in, but in the end we were very impressed with how they responded.'*

In London, pupils doing Young Apprenticeships in Business Administration have completed the London Open College Network's entry-level Preparation for Work Unit with Maria Marsh, Training Team Leader at Camden ITeC. *'We got them thinking about what it would be like working in a team and information-sharing, and we worked with them on confidence and self-esteem.'*

These pupils are now on work placements one day per week, with

organisations like Red Carnation Hotels and Training for Life, a charity which trains adults returning to work. Beryl Mann, Senior Administrator at the charity, supervises one Young Apprentice. *'I hadn't taught before, but I like to share knowledge. I had to make sure that everybody gave him a bit of time to settle in, but now he comes in all smiles, greeting everybody.'* The role of the assessor has been key; at first Beryl was unsure of what evidence needed to be saved, as information from the Partnership hadn't filtered down to her. *'Last Friday his assessor came in and told me what was needed, and it turns out that we've done quite a lot.'*



Fourteen-year-old Afrah is on placement at the Rubens Hotel near Buckingham Palace.

### Spotlight on resources for GCSEs in vocational subjects

The Specialist Schools Trust has a One Stop Shop with links and practitioner case studies for each of the eight titles. <http://www.schoolsnetwork.org.uk>

The LSDA's Vocational Learning site includes advice on critical success factors. <http://www.vocationallearning.org.uk>

SEMTA has websites for GCSE Engineering and GCSE Manufacturing. <http://www.gcseinengineering.com> <http://www.gcseinmanufacturing.com>

The awarding bodies provide training courses for teachers delivering the GCSEs, plus exemplar materials,

portfolio marking guidance, past papers, and teacher and student guides. Details can be found on their websites.

<http://www.aqa.org.uk>  
<http://www.edexcel.org.uk>  
<http://www.ocr.org.uk>

## Programmes around the country *Knowsley, Cheshire and Shropshire – Engineering*

Despite the inevitable teething problems of setting up programmes (*'You'd think that if they're from the same borough they'd have the same half-terms and a similar setup for exams and things, and that isn't the case'*, says Steve Alcock of Knowsley Community College), pupils on these three engineering programmes in the North West are making tremendous strides. *'They're starting to talk like engineers'*, reports Margaret Harwood, Deputy Head Teacher at Great Sankey High School in Warrington, where pupils went through a rigorous selection procedure, and were rewarded with a team-building event to launch the programme.



Launched with a splash: pupils from three schools in Cheshire and Warrington got to know each other through a team-building day at the beginning of their programme.

Caroline Welson has noticed a similar rise in confidence among the 31 pupils who train at Telford College of Arts and Technology's new CoVE (Centre of Vocational Excellence) building with its state-of-the-art soap-manufacturing plant. *'The CoVE building is very new, only opened in September, and we've had various VIP visits. The Young Apprentices are not fazed by anybody – they'll rub shoulders with the best of them.'* The group's identity is further cemented with their own special boiler suits, logos on their t-shirts and jumpers, and the same colour used for Young Apprenticeship materials. The inspiration was TCAT's sports academy, and the idea was to help the pupils feel that they're a part of the college from day one.

This enthusiasm is shared by pupils training at Knowsley Community College, who've volunteered to come to college during half term. Steve Alcock, who has taught GCSE Engineering to previous groups, is shortly to change places with a school teacher who will come to the college and teach some electronics using its facilities, but in the meantime he has been sharing best practice with his colleagues teaching Young Apprenticeships. *'Funnily enough, rather than having a nice image of an icon on the computer that I just point to, the GCSE pupils preferred me to draw it on the board, then they looked for it on the screen. They said*

*it helped them remember better. And I've told my colleagues that it's easier to teach ProDesktop before AutoCAD, because you can get results straight away with it, whereas with AutoCAD you need to be mathematical and methodical.'*

All involved agree, however, that a great deal of time needs to be dedicated to ensuring that programmes are successful, and great efforts made to ensure communication is good within the Partnership. *'In the initial stages, it's important to make sure that someone at a certain level of management has the time to organise'*, says Margaret Harwood. *'Very often there are meetings where you have to make decisions on the spot.'* Caroline Welson points out that much of the paperwork is the same for Young Apprenticeships as for the Increased Flexibility Programme, *'but we all reinvent our own wheels so I think it's really important to be sharing good practice'*. Health and safety is another major issue where pitfalls can be avoided by having industry health and safety officers at planning meetings, so that arrangements aren't made then overruled for safety reasons.

Good communication with parents and pupils is equally vital. Great Sankey took pains to make their application procedure as transparent as possible, debriefing unsuccessful students

(and their parents if requested) so as to defuse any potential resentment. They have also taken pains to stage other activities for pupils not on the programme. At Congleton High School in the same Partnership, Irene Bartley has made sure all students and parents are committed to the extra workload the programme has entailed by drawing up a signed contract and keeping in regular touch with parents, and the school works hard to ensure students catch up with work missed when out training or in the workplace.

The time and labour is starting to pay off however. The pupils in Telford are already working within quality systems to fulfil live orders for a company, and attendance has been 100%. John Stead, Project Manager in Cheshire and Warrington, reports that all of the pupils on the programme are anticipated to have attained their Level 2 City and Guilds qualification in AutoCAD within the first year. *'We're now looking at developing some practical activity already this year rather than starting in September as we'd planned, and in the second year we're hoping to take them on a study tour to Germany.'*

*Knowsley, Cheshire and Shropshire – Engineering*

**The employers’ perspective**

Before the work placements began, Siemens held a very successful open evening and factory tour for parents, children and school staff. Pupils were ‘colour-coded’ so that parents could visit the locations where their children would be on placement. Less successful was a group evaluation activity with pupils at the end of the first week – ‘we’re used to focus groups of adults where it’s very constructive, but with 14-year-olds it didn’t work well’, says Howard Ball diplomatically. One future option might be to take two representatives from the group to feed back as ‘champions’ on behalf of the others.

British Nuclear Fuels Limited (BNFL) is planning a different format for the final review at the end of the placement. ‘The students will prepare a presentation to give back to us’, explains BNFL’s Lorraine Buttery. ‘We’ll invite the managers and possibly parents as well to our conference centre, so they can do some grown-up delivery.’

Between placements, Siemens hosts Industry Days at school, for example exploring lean manufacturing using a lego model. ‘Then’, says Howard, ‘on their next placement, they’ll be able to go into a Continuous Improvement Process Team meeting to see how lean manufacturing principles affect real life, so they actually go away with a lot more from their experience.’

**Programmes around the country**  
*Northumberland – Health and Social Care*

In Northumberland, thirty pupils from two schools are studying Health and Social Care, in a programme coordinated by Tracey Nicholson of Northumberland, Tyne and Wear Strategic Health Authority’s STEPS Into Healthcare initiative. They’ve just completed a first placement at Wansbeck General Hospital, one afternoon per week. ‘I’ve made sure they go with a set of objectives to achieve’, says Tracey. ‘Because of the nature of the setting, they are there to observe and learn about the service, not to do an afternoon’s work. They have to be able to do a written piece on the function of that department, and interview two members of staff about the skills and qualifications for the job. What’s really important to make it successful is that the placement staff have to be well informed about what the young person is doing there.’

people, I’ve asked them to tell the pupils exactly what you need to do the work, and to talk about the variety of work, because we have three grades in the pharmacy and I wanted them to see all the routes in. I have found the hardest bit was only to have them for two hours at a time. That was very limiting in terms of what we could do with them and what they could see. We also lost the first week because of a health and safety issue – there was a piece of paperwork that hadn’t been completed.

‘But when I think back to when I started out, I wanted to work in the NHS but I knew I didn’t want to be a nurse. These pupils can see how much the NHS has to offer now. They do a rotation through different departments and wards and I think that’s fabulous.’

Students who visited the pharmacy department have been out on the wards, seeing how stocks there are maintained, as well as being taken into the aseptic unit to learn about how chemotherapy is prepared. Paula Norris, the department’s training manager, says, ‘When I’ve briefed

**Pupils on the Young Apprenticeship in Engineering give their views**

**Andrew Slater**  
**Knowsley Hey School,**  
**Merseyside**

*At first it wasn’t like you’d expect a factory to be like. It was a lot bigger, and a lot safer and cleaner than I’d imagined. It’s helped me understand a lot more than if I’d just stayed in school.*

**Liam Wells**  
**Great Sankey High School,**  
**Warrington**

*BNFL is quite a big place – different to what I expected. It’s really really enjoyable. My classmates are pretty jealous because I get to come into work.*

**Tristan Taylor**  
**The Charlton School,**  
**Wellington, Telford**

*At school they treat us like children but here they treat us like adults and we really like that. It wasn’t so clear the first time round – they used a lot of big words. But now, if they use a technical word, we’re like ‘Yes, sure, we’ll go and do that’, we know exactly what they’re on about and we just work to it.*

**Matthew Fryer**  
**Great Sankey High School,**  
**Warrington**

*It was pretty nerve-racking the first day but you do get used to it. The most nerve-racking thing about it was the security – we’re not allowed to go anywhere without being escorted. On the computer we had to put our name in, and then it stretched it out like a contour map and the colours showed where the most stress was. I’m very happy that I got on the programme.*

If you have an idea about what you would like to see featured in future editions of this newsletter, please email Sandra.Jackson@dfes.gsi.gov.uk.