

Stafford students learn valuable lessons from language experts

Weston Road High School in Stafford working with Roevin Translations, Kate Wild and Spencer Allman.



Weston Road High School, on the eastern edge of Stafford, opened in September 1979 and now provides a comprehensive education to over one thousand 11 to 18 year olds. Amongst its specialist facilities is a language laboratory where students learn French or German from Year 7. The school strives to offer students a broad education in preparation for their transition into the world of work, which is why, in November 2007, they invited a selection of local language experts and businesses to visit the school.

Amongst the visitors were three language experts sourced through the Regional Language Network. Liz Athey, Operations Manager for Roevin Translation Services, Kate Wild, who operates her own translation business and is due to move into a role within the legal environment and Spencer Allman, a freelance translator, visited the school on 20 November 2007 to talk to students about the vast range of opportunities on offer to those with language skills.

After the RLN had introduced the three language experts to the school, an initial meeting was held with each to determine how best to structure the morning and what kind of information would be on offer. It was decided to base the theme of the morning around the importance of languages in business with particular focus on setting up your own business, translation and languages in the legal environment.

This project is part of the Business Language Champions programme, co-ordinated by the Regional Language Network (RLN) West Midlands. It is designed to bridge the gap between school and the workplace and to reverse the decline in the take-up of modern foreign languages.

117 Year 9 students listened to talks on a wide variety of topics relating to languages delivered by Liz, Kate and Spencer as well as representatives from JCB, Michelin and Birmingham Airport. During the morning pupils also had the opportunity to try out Chinese, Russian and Polish.

Julia Moorhouse, head of languages, was delighted with how the morning went and passed on her thanks to all of the business representatives involved:

“The morning went really well and it was great to have three different perspectives on using languages to remind students of the vast range of opportunities on offer if they continue with their language studies.”

Spencer Allman said:

“The kids were great. They were particularly drawn to the sound of language. Some also seemed inspired by the idea of using the commoner languages they learnt at school, i.e French and German as a stepping-stone to learning more exotic ones such as Arabic or Chinese.”

Kate Wild added:

“I truly believe that this initiative was a great opportunity for business and lingual experts to make a positive impact on students and broaden their future career horizons.”

The day’s activities contributed to increasing awareness of language careers and maintained pupil numbers at GCSE level. The school has also introduced another course at GCSE level to widen pupil interest and will commence teaching Spanish in September 2009.

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