

NEWS RELEASE

Burton students get real life language lessons

Students from Paget High School in Burton learnt the true value of continuing with their language studies when they were visited by a local entrepreneur.

Angela Maxwell, former European advisor to UK Trade & Investment and director of Birmingham-based Fracino, the UK's only manufacturer of espresso and cappuccino coffee machines, visited the school on 5 February 2008 to talk with students about the importance of languages in business.

During assembly Angela talked about her experience of using languages, including being honoured by the Queen at Buckingham Palace for her outstanding contribution to UK Trade and Industry. Pupils were then split into groups to question Angela about why they need languages and how businesses make use of such skills.

This project is part of the Business Language Champions programme, which is co-ordinated by Regional Language Network West Midlands (RLN WM). It is designed to bridge the gap between school and the workplace and to reverse the recent decline in the take up of modern foreign languages. The 'Champions' bring language skills alive by highlighting the problems local companies have recruiting staff that can speak more than one language and helping pupils to see how important these skills are in the workplace.

The talks were well received and enjoyed by all, as Janet Nash, head of languages, said:

“Angela’s talk made students realise the importance of learning a language and that speaking another language is a vitally important business asset in a competitive world. Rapid expansion and globalisation means that students with a language will have a competitive edge in the market place and we hope that this realisation will increase the take up of languages at Key Stage 4. We intend to introduce business-based language courses and challenges in the future and look forward to working with Angela again.”

Chris Overall, RLN manager, added:

“With so much bad news in the press about the decline of languages, we are delighted that the Business Language Champion initiative is bringing businesses and schools together to highlight how important language skills are.”

Angela was delighted with the response from students:

“I thoroughly enjoyed my visit, as it became clear that by exploring the variety of options open to those that study languages offered the students a new perspective on the world of work.”

Paget High is an 11-18 school serving Burton and Branston and teaches French and German.

Angela Maxwell is one of the region’s most dynamic entrepreneurs after building Birmingham-based Fracino, the UK’s only manufacturer of espresso and cappuccino coffee machines, from a £400,000 turnover in 1995 to its current status as a £2 million world-class leading brand. She was a finalist in Businesswoman of the Year 2005 and also recently accepted an invitation to become a regional ambassador for the Women’s Enterprise Network.

Business Language Champions is a programme funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families and supported by a network of sponsors: BNP Paribas, Goethe-Institut, the National Network of Education and Business Partnerships, Business in the Community and the Comenius Network. It is co-ordinated by the Regional Language Network West Midlands with the support of CILT, The National Centre for Languages.

For further information on Regional Language Network West Midlands visit www.rln-westmidlands.com.

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Issued by Regional Language Network West Midlands. Media contact is Frances Pallett on 0121 329 3297 or 07789 116818

Notes to editors

Regional Language Network West Midlands offers a one-stop shop for language and cultural expertise for businesses in the region. Acting as the gateway to language services, courses and jobs within the region, the network helps SMEs to realise their export potential through

improving their international communication. By helping companies to find solutions to language and cultural barriers it aims to trigger greater international trading boosting investment, job creation and business' bottom lines.