

NEWS RELEASE

### **Stafford pupils have a taste of languages**

Students from Weston Road High School learnt some valuable lessons recently when they were visited by three language experts.

Liz Athey, operations manager for Roevin Translation Services, Spencer Allman, a freelance translator and Kate Wild, a representative from the public sector and freelance translator visited the Stafford-based school to deliver interactive presentations about the importance of language skills in the world of work.

117 Year 9 students listened to talks on setting up a freelance business, working for a large translation company, using languages in the legal environment and how languages can aid future career paths. Representatives from JCB, Michelin and Birmingham airport also took part and pupils had the opportunity to try out Chinese, Polish and Russian.

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 presentations were well received with pupils asking plenty of questions and making the most of the experts on hand. Julia Moorhouse, head of languages at Weston Road, said:

“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.”

Chris Overall, RLN manager, added:

“Businesses in the region are finding it increasingly difficult to find employees who have studied languages alongside their other skills. Business people such as Liz, Kate and Spencer are powerful advocates in reversing this trend and help place languages in an inspiring context.”

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.”

Liz Athey echoed these sentiments:

“I thoroughly enjoyed spending the morning at Weston Road, engaging with Year 9 students. I hope that the Business Language Champions initiative helps to convince the students that continuing with their language studies can only be of benefit to them in their working lives.”

Weston Road High School is a comprehensive 11-18 school, which teaches French, German and Spanish.

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](http://www.rln-westmidlands.com).

ENDS

Caption:

*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.