



COLLEGES IN THE BLACK COUNTRY

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

CASE STUDY

Working with employers

Our Colleges work closely with numerous employers on a range of initiatives, whether they are mentoring our students or our assessors are providing training in the workplace.

These collaborations have a direct impact on the regional economy, providing work ready new recruits and boosting the skills of those already in employment.

A pioneering programme that combines business and education to raise the aspirations of 16 to 19-year-olds is making vocational education 'count' at Halesowen College.

The Halesowen Career Academy of Finance, which has recently celebrated its first anniversary, involves a two-year course of study equivalent to three A levels, complemented by one-to-one mentoring by employer volunteers and a six-week paid internship in a supporting company for all students involved.

The Academy enables students to undertake 'real business' experience to help them progress to higher education and into a business-related career.

Opportunities for business include mentoring young people, running workshops and presentations for students and joining the Halesowen College advisory board.

An impressive group of employers are taking part, including HSBC, Black Country Chamber, Alliance 4 the Black Country, 4 Financial Solutions and Newman University College.

Elaine Cammies, who helped launch the Academy, said: "Supporting their local Career Academy is a great way for employers to make a corporate social responsibility contribution to their community.

"Helping young people to realise their potential and equipping them with the skills they need for a career in business can only be beneficial for both employers and students."

One company that brought learning into the workplace was Walsall-based MacNeillie. A market leader in specialist vehicle conversions and a supplier to the emergency services and the military, eight of its employees undertook NVQs in





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Distribution, Warehousing and Storage Operations through Walsall College.

Fully funded through the Train to Gain scheme, all the training and assessment was carried out at MacNeillie, minimising disruption.

The company has since put more staff through work-based qualifications, including ITQ, Team Leading and Business Administration.

Storeman Ken Ward said: "The course was very good and allowed us to learn new things, as well as prove what we already knew. Since completing the course, we have all started to look at things differently and approach our work in a safer way".

Stores Manager John Smith said: "I'm proud of them all. Although our Store Workers are extremely experienced and good at what they do, onsite training helps to sharpen their approach, increase their awareness of health and safety issues and give them more confidence in their role."

Assessor Tony O'Sullivan said: "MacNeillie is an extremely busy site so it was imperative the training caused the workers minimal disruption. I worked alongside them to train and assess, and they did everything I asked."