

Unblocking the Talent Pipeline: Bridging the gap between education and employment

Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) is delighted to be affiliated with the Careers and Enterprise Company Enterprise Adviser Network (EAN), which is designed to bridge the gap between education and employers.

As part of the EAN programme, Edgbarrow School in Crowthorne, one of the highest performing schools in the area, hosted an employer's collaboration event on 9 December. The aim of the event, hosted by Dr Phillip Lee MP and attended by key local businesses, was to strengthen the link between the school and businesses and to continue working together in the future so students are able to gain real hands on experience in industry. An example of this being the work experience placements students have undertaken at Romans Group office in Wokingham, involving students shadowing estate agents and spending time in all areas of the business.



The Enterprise Adviser, Ken Sankey, Business Consultant, is working strategically with the Senior Leadership Team, careers lead, and parent governors at the school to develop employer relations. At the employer engagement event, Ken collaborated with the school steering group and businesses to discuss how they could form part of improved employer engagement with the school.

Dr Phillip Lee MP commented, "A recurring concern amongst businesses that I visit in the constituency is the skills gap amongst young people coming into the workplace from schools and university. It will be essential for the future prosperity of this country that we take steps to address this issue and I am an enthusiastic supporter of initiatives such as this one organised by Edgbarrow School. We also have to remove the perception that an apprenticeship or on-the-job training is somehow less valuable than a university degree. At the event at Edgbarrow School, I was struck by the speech from the senior project manager from Kier, who told the meeting that he had left school at 16 and worked his way up through the industry.

Bethany Copland, Foundation Manager at Overbury and Morgan Lovell, added, "We're delighted to have been invited to participate in the event. Building our talent pipeline and encouraging young people towards a career in the construction industry is a significant part of growing and evolving our business. We firmly believe that the best way to do this is by offering work experience, internships and placements so students can gain real-life skills. We hope to continue our association with Edgbarrow School to bring the brightest minds to Overbury and Morgan Lovell."



Bob Elsey, Head Teacher of Edgbarrow School said, "It's brilliant to see so many people give up their time to come to our event. We are keen to build strong relationships with businesses that are beneficial to both parties, whilst enabling our students to gain invaluable experience and skills they can use in their future career."

The Head Boy, Callum Hill, and Head Girl, Flora Hamilton added, "Work experience has taught us key life skills and helped us to identify what we want in a future career. We strongly believe that creating links with businesses is invaluable in helping students prepare for later life".

Katharine Horler, Community Sector Director on the Thames Valley Berkshire LEP Executive Board, commented on the Enterprise Adviser match between Ken Sankey and the school, "I am delighted that Ken Sankey has been able to work strategically with Edgbarrow School on this event. It is fantastic that he has come together so positively with the school to help with the collaboration of industry professionals and put enterprise activities at the ethos of the whole school, which will benefit its students and our next generation in Thames Valley Berkshire."

For further information about the Enterprise Adviser programme please email Allison Giles at allison@thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk