

Case Study

Chaucer students go a long way with Travel Agency

A Sheffield school has converted part of its premises into a travel agency that can be used by students, staff and the public. Students have also been working alongside key tourism and travel representatives as part of their education.



Part of the school was converted into the travel agency, which includes a work area for the students.



Chaucer Travel Agency was set up with LEGL support to provide a business that can operate on school grounds to benefit members of the public, as well as staff and students.

The students from Chaucer Business and Enterprise College are also working alongside travel and tourism groups around Sheffield, as well as other schools.

Gillian Ward, deputy head and Enterprise Lead at Chaucer, says: "Following BiG funding, students established the Chaucer Travel Agency, turning part of the school into their shop. However, the initial model proved difficult to maintain as a business, due in part to the location of the Agency, so we worked with our School Enterprise Champions to find out how we could maximise its potential as an important part of our student's learning.

"Thanks to our close working with Karen Wood, our School Enterprise Champion, we have been able to benefit from a clearer 'business to business' focus and from introductions to key Travel and Tourism partners. The students have been helping to organise excursions to the Peak District and local area, as well as forming links within the city to work alongside active, successful businesses and see how they operate.

"The students have also given their business a charitable slant. The Travel Agency accepts foreign currency which is then donated to Cancer Research UK. The pupils want to help raise money through business, giving them an idea of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and they picked Cancer Research as their chosen charity.

"Setting this up has given the students involved a real taste of business life and a great understanding of the travel industry. From September 2010, we will be one of the first schools in Sheffield offering a specialist Travel and Tourism Diploma to students. The work they have already done working in their own Agency will be invaluable to them on this course.

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One such link that is being developed is with the Jurys Inn Hotel in the centre of Sheffield.

The 259-bedroom hotel opened in 2009 and students from Chaucer have been in discussions with the stylish property about producing resources for visitors to the hotel.

The students are planning to produce itineraries for Sheffield and the surrounding area for guests who want to see the sights of the city, and perhaps experience some of the fantastic countryside that borders it.

Gillian added, “Many of the Jurys Inn guests are business people who perhaps have to stop over but don't want to spend the day or evening sitting in their hotel room. The students are working on producing itineraries to share some of the very best bits of the city and surrounding areas with visitors who aren't familiar with Sheffield.

“This element of the project will help them develop their business skills when dealing with the Jurys Inn and also their market research when attempting to find out exactly what visitors to Sheffield want to see and do.

“All of their practical work and experiences will go a long way in their future education and the work they will undertake as part of the Diploma in Travel and Tourism.”

The Travel and Tourism Diploma has been developed in response to employer demands for better skilled and employable young people and will be offered by Chaucer from September 2010.

Many other projects for the Travel Agency are being developed and further information can be obtained from Karen Wood.

Please contact karen.wood1@sheffield.gov.uk to discuss the potential development of business projects in your school.



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