

Made in Sheffield

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Organisation: Sheffield City Council

Country: United Kingdom

Level of government: Local government

Sector: Education

Type: Organisational Design, Partnerships

Launched in: 2012

Link to the innovation's website

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Description

The Made In Sheffield project is based on internationally-recognised research. For example 'The Global Achievement Gap,' Tony Wagner and the work of The Sutton Trust on what works in education.

This has meant that we have brought together three important elements:

- A project-based curriculum linked to the world of work;
- A skills framework developed with employers;
- A menu of opportunities/activities connecting learning to the world of work.

Through a partnership of employers, schools, colleges and Local Government, we have six key business growth sectors (Engineering/Manufacturing, Sheffield Teaching Hospitals, Computer Science, Glass Manufacturing, Children's Hospital and Retail) delivering enhanced work tasters, master classes, and project-based learning to Sheffield school/college students (Ambassadors) and wider school cohorts.

These are new sector developments with enhanced partnership work between education and business communities. A new co-created Skills Passport is enabling the young people to capture the skills that employers require.

Examples of project include:

University of Sheffield Computer Science Cutlers' Ambassadors Scheme in cooperation with The Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire

Why the innovation was developed

The skill levels of the workforce have fallen behind the skills demands of the new economy. We require our young people to have higher level technical skills. Moreover young people, as well as their parents, teachers and others who influence their career choices often have outdated perceptions of the growth sectors. There is scope to develop their skills by building a bridge between the growth sectors and education. The bridge takes the form of a progression pathway, which provides the key skills employers need and insures young people are well-informed about the future economy.

Objectives

Improve access, Improve effectiveness, Improve social equity, Support economic growth

- A skills framework developed with employers.
 - A menu of opportunities/activities connecting learning to the world of work.
 - A project-based school curriculum linked to challenges, issues and opportunities in the world of work.
 - A skills passport developed with and recognised by employers, colleges and universities.
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Main beneficiaries

Businesses, Families, Students, Young people

- Student Ambassadors (350) gain enhanced experiences of work.
- Employers will gain from this through 'job ready' skilled young people.
- Teachers (100) will gain an improved understanding of business.
- Wider school student bodies (4,000) and college students using new skills Passport (6,000).
- Parents will see their children progressing into employment.

Results

Efficiency

By exploring the usage of the latest videoconferencing technology to further establish and develop contacts between schools and the workplace. Potential for reducing the amount of transportation required and use time more efficiently.

Effectiveness

- Better relationships and understanding between employers and schools.
 - Student ambassadors have improved knowledge and work skills and therefore improved employment progression opportunities. Ambassadors have already been offered apprenticeships and part-time work whilst still at school. School staff and parents are commenting explicitly on how the young people have developed their skill set.
 - The Ambassador programme focuses strongly on experiences which cannot be delivered in schools (Evaluation report).
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Service quality

Accessibility:

- 55% of new Computer Science ambassadors are girls compared with an industry rate of less than 10%.
- Around half of the Cutlers' Engineering/Manufacturing Ambassadors are girls (traditionally a male sector) and similarly half of the Sheffield Teaching Hospital Ambassadors are boys (traditionally a female sector).

Responsiveness:

There is real enthusiasm from schools and employer champions to work together to broaden the curriculum, to develop the skills and attitudes required for the workplace, to raise general awareness of the world of work, and more specifically of opportunities for talented young people within engineering and advanced manufacturing and the NHS hospital trust. Four new sectors are now in place for the 2013/2014 academic year.

User satisfaction

- Only 1-2 student ambassadors have withdrawn from the programme to date.
 - Very positive evaluation undertaken by the University of Sheffield (Executive Summary provided). For example, "The programme is highly regarded by students, parents, schools and employers as a mechanism for enriching and enhancing the skills, attitudes and knowledge young people develop at school," and "The Ambassadors have impressed everyone who has met them and they have been powerful advocates for the programme, locally, regionally and nationally" -The University of Sheffield Made in Sheffield Evaluation.
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Other improvements

The programme has attracted significant numbers of applications from students, support from employers, and has captured the imagination of parents from the six schools involved. Interest has also been shown from the Department of BIS at the Permanent Secretary Level and the CBI.

Results not available yet

- 106 students are more likely to gain employment/apprenticeships on completion of the two year programme.
 - All existing schools continue to maintain involvement in the programme and have recruited 90 students in year two.
 - 4 new employment sectors are now engaged with a further 150 student ambassadors in place.
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Evaluation

The evaluation of the first year of the pilot programme was undertaken by the University of Sheffield. Their School of Education was commissioned by Sheffield City Council (Local Government).

The evaluation was based partially on the "Theory of Change" concept, which has been successfully used both in business and education. The aim was to identify intended goals for various stakeholder groups, using these as a basis for data collection and research/evaluation design.

Outcomes for the Made in Sheffield Programme were identified for each of the four stakeholder groups - young people, schools, parents and employers. This framework then formed the basis for questions to be addressed with each group. Interviews were undertaken with all key stakeholders during the research phase (May-July 2013).

A written report and executive summary were presented to the Cutlers' Company, Local Government staff, schools and other employers. The report identified existing good practice as well as areas for further development.

Development

Design

Members of a leading guild in Sheffield - the Cutlers Company of Hallamshire were invited to develop a model working with identified schools and Local Government. A two-year pilot period began in September 2012 with 4 schools selected by the Cutlers' Company (Engineering/Manufacturing theme). Two additional schools were invited to join a Care theme.

All participating schools, the Cutlers', Sheffield Teaching Hospital staff and the Local Government have developed this collaborative approach. Steering Groups operate for both themes meeting on a monthly basis. Local Government staffs provide project management support.

Testing

Piloting: selection and recruitment of a cohort of student Ambassadors in both themes (108 students) was undertaken in September 2012. They have experienced a menu of work-related activity, combining knowledge and skills; they've recorded their skills so these are accredited by a senior employer attached to each school. Professional development sessions for teaching staff by employers have also been delivered. They develop real world problems to bring back to the classroom for a wider group of students. A skills framework has been co-created by employers and schools. Four new sector themes are being trialled from September 2013.

Lessons Learned

Lessons Learned

- Approach to Partnership: The interest of students and parents has far exceeded the places available, indeed, current levels of satisfaction provide clear evidence that this partnership-based approach is the appropriate model for social change.
 - Programme Design: The opportunity with this programme to meet the needs of employers more accurately. This in turn is more likely to release school staff to focus upon successful engagement and a better experience of work-based learning. Undertaking this on an annual cycle ensures a release from pressures which currently exist for those administering programmes in schools.
 - Funding models: This innovative approach holds many implications for the current approach to funding the progression of young people into the work sectors. This model represents a more effective resource allocation for each partner in the process of securing a flow of new entrants into a professional area. Moreover, this flow of young people is more likely to have the right skill set and contextual understanding for the employment context.
 - On-going challenges: However there are still issues facing partners including: the pressure on schools to focus on academic content and knowledge (current national education focus); and the development time and funding to support this programme at this early stage.
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Conditions for success

- Commitment from employers and schools to partnerships and co-creating programmes for the benefit of young people.
- Funding and time to support the development stage.
- Skilled and effective personnel from Local Government who can establish this collaborative approach with schools and employers, which influences and contributes to their current own agendas i.e. identification of mutual benefits.
- City wide programme which ensures increased interest and involvement from new schools and new business sectors.
- High profile launching events and a celebration of success.
- Products and relevant materials available to a wider body of teachers and students.
- Motivated young people.
- Support of parents.