

FIRST STEPS TO WORK



Understanding the importance of a good grasp of both basic skills and employability skills in their future working lives is vital for school pupils - the country's future workforce. These skills include:

- Literacy and Numeracy.
- ICT.
- Teamwork.
- Task and time management.
- Communication including listening to, and acting upon, instructions.
- Creativity and innovation.
- Problem solving.

Equally important is an awareness of the range and diversity of businesses in the area and early exposure to enterprise education and a knowledge of how businesses work, in both large and small settings.

First Steps to Work Events are currently funded for a number of schools by The Sunderland Partnership through the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund for Year 5 (Key Stage 2) primary school pupils. The programme aims to embed an understanding of these skills into pupils' early work related learning and experience of enterprise education through:

- Bringing together local businesses and pupils to work through a series of practical activities that reinforce the relevance of key skills in the workplace.
- Challenging pupils to work as a team to solve problems and to come up with creative solutions to various challenges.
- Offering pupils an 'informal' setting in which to talk with local businesses about career and training opportunities.
- Encouraging pupils to develop the skill of self-reflection.
- Provide pupils with early exposure to positive work related learning and enterprise opportunities.

First Steps to Work Events see EBC recruiting local businesses to run a series of practical activities for pupils. EBC works with the businesses to develop activities which reflect companies' particular areas of expertise and which match pupils' learning needs and abilities.

Each First Steps to Work Event attracts up to 125 pupils and activities are tailored to match the ages of pupils. The events are designed to see pupils from cluster primaries coming together at a single event - giving the youngsters an early opportunity to meet others who will eventually be their classmates in secondary school. Each event is delivered to at least three cluster primaries with pupils being put in teams made up of pupils from all schools. This gives pupils an early experience of having to 'work with strangers' - as is the case in many workplace situations. This also helps to address barriers to employment and gives an early insight into the world of work.

Pupils work in teams of around 10 to experience each activity which are delivered in a 'round robin' style. Each activity lasts around 20 minutes, giving pupils a series of quick, exciting learning experiences across the day. This ensures that there is a real pace to the work that keeps the more disaffected learners on track.

Activities at First Steps to Work Events are designed to develop key employability skills from an early age and begin to lay the foundations for concepts such as teamwork, problem solving and task management that are critical to maximise pupils' classroom learning and also in many workplaces.

Education Business Connections provides:

- Recruitment of businesses to deliver activities.
- Practical advice and guidance to companies on the development of their proposed activities.
- Recruitment of schools to take part in the event.
- Full event organisation, including arrangements for venues, transport, and all related housekeeping aspects.
- Full post-event evaluation.

'BUILDING CONFIDENCE IN YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH A CREATIVE APPROACH TO CURRICULUM NEEDS AND BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS'