

Skills for Work CASE STUDY

Early Education and Childcare Intermediate Two

St George's School for Girls is delivering this Course through its own nursery.

Rationale

The school was keen to offer the Early Education and Childcare Course as it had previously offered Care Units to students and wanted to extend this provision. The school liked the idea of the embedded employment skills. Links through the whole school were established by using the school's nursery as the context for delivering the course. A Curriculum for Excellence encourages the principle of confident individuals and effective contributors which is a feature of the Course work.

Partnership Arrangements

As the school has an onsite facility suitable for Course delivery, its own nursery, external partnerships were not required to deliver this Course.



Delivery Approaches



The Course is offered as one of the options in the school's portfolio of vocational courses. An information leaflet is available to students. Selection of candidates is made after candidates present their CV to the Course leader, are interviewed, references are taken up and SCRO checks processed.

Induction is given to candidates following the standard school induction procedure for new staff. Timetabling is arranged in liaison with students with consideration being given to other subjects undertaken. This is carried out by the Course leader and the Head of Curriculum Studies. Staffing is arranged by the Course leader and her nursery staff. Nursery nurses as well as the course leader acted as mentors to the students. This innovation has prompted the nursery staff to go forward for their Assessor's certificate. Assessment strategies are being developed and implemented to allow nursery staff to complete their Units. This has proved a great help to the Course leader and internal verifier. The support materials provided by SFEU are very helpful and are supplemented by the course leader's own materials. Links with employers are met through visits to other establishments.

Employability Skills

The delivery of the Course takes the form of both theory and practical experience. The employability skills are taught through the theory classes but assessed in the work of the students in the actual workplace. The students are taught in the nursery work place and have easy access to the actual playrooms. This is an ideal setting to deliver the course as all the practical resources and learning opportunities are readily available in the one place. This facilitates ease of communication between staff and students.



Centre Evaluation

The course is presented informally. Students call staff by their first names and find this puts them at ease when talking over employment issues. Students' confidence in the workplace has grown and led to a better understanding of workplace practice. Students, staff and parents have found the course to be beneficial to the children in all kinds of ways. The students have provided quality extras to the workplace, for example, by giving one to one attention to children when necessary. They have successfully transferred their learning in the theory class to their practice in the playroom.

Parents have received feedback from their children about the students and how much they like them being in nursery. Parents have shared this feedback with staff and students. Some parents have intimated that they would employ the students in some kind of childminding or nannying work with their children.

Future Delivery Plans

The school is considering offering the subject at Higher or HNC level. It has extended the Units to S5 and S6 and is looking at Intermediate 1 for S3 and S4 next year.



Advice

The challenges for this centre are mainly time related. The students are highly committed to their studies and sometimes have to juggle timetables and prioritise work loads in order to meet the demands of this course. The Course can work very well and increase the options for students. It also helps career decisions. Partnership with a nursery is desirable. Students experiencing a real workplace have advantages over simulated experiences.

