

**Interesting Practice in Skills (3-18) – Developing the Young Workforce context**

**Breadalbane Academy (Perth and Kinross:**

 **School-employer partnerships at the heart of the learner journey**

**1. Introduction**

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| **Establishment**  | Breadalbane Academy |
| **Contact name and details**  | John Devine, HeadteacherMonica Young, Project Officer |
| **About the establishment/ programme** | Breadalbane Academy is an all-through school (2-18) with a catchment covering most of Highland Perthshire.At Breadalbane, we want our young people to enjoy their time at school and leave with a broad range of knowledge and skills; a strong sense of values; and well-developed personal qualities. We aim to offer a rich set of experiences within the classroom and beyond it. These include courses designed to meet the needs of all learners - whether academic or vocational - as well as a broad range of wider achievement activities *for all* as a part of our ‘Breadalbane Guarantee’.Employer partnership is a key pillar on which we have built the ‘totality’ of our curriculum. As we begin to focus on post-Covid recovery, these relationships with local businesses are serving as a solid foundation from which to build new opportunities for our pupils, combat youth unemployment and rebuild the local economy.100% of Breadalbane Academy school leavers went on to a positive destination in 2020. |
| **Main tags (please delete / add)** | PrimarySecondaryPartnershipsEmployer EngagementPositive DestinationsCareersDYWSkillsEnterprise |

**2. Current developments:**

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| **What are you doing just now?**(title and key information related to DYW, possibly bulleted) | Since 2017 Breadalbane Academy has adopted strategic approach to establishing, maintaining and developing a robust network of employer partnerships. We organise employability inputs throughout the curriculum planned around eight broad ‘employment pathways’, reflecting local and national data, to ensure all pupils engage with a range of relevant career pathways in a way that is both coherent and innovative. Key points: * 3-5 year written ‘partnership agreements’ in place with several local/national employers
* Elements of curriculum codesigned/delivered by partners
* A universal approach to inputs in the BGE, followed by greater targeting in the senior phase
* All subject departments supported to embed employer partnership into curriculum design and delivery.
* Almost all engagements are hands-on or contain interactive elements
* Implementation of the Breadalbane Academy ‘Skills Wheel’ across the whole school, based on consultation with key partners.

The Covid-19 restrictions presented several obvious challenges to employer engagement events. Some were not possible to deliver and others took place virtually.In response to the changing youth employment landscape, we shifted the main focus of our employer partnership work towards creating opportunities for positive destinations and in September 2020 the *Breadalbane Futures* group was formed. This group has representation from the school, SDS, youth work and 30 local businesses. It aims to combat youth unemployment, harness potential, and create real opportunities for training and employment in Highland Perthshire. |
| **How was this done?** | * **Employer Engagements**

 These have been carefully tailored to ensure that the link between learning and its application in the ‘real-world’ is made explicit. Careful auditing of pupil experiences has ensured that gaps have been identified and addressed by developing new or existing partnerships. A universal approach in the BGE ensures that all young people have a range of experiences and skills development to support them in making appropriate choices of curricular pathways as they move into the senior phase. All employer inputs are cross-referenced with the *Career Standard* to ensure they support the delivery of national expectations.* **Skills**

An extensive consultation process with teachers, pupils and the school’s employer network identified 12 key ‘skills’ as being most valued. These skills were incorporated into an interactive wheel graphic with descriptors which was codesigned with a partner employer.This common language for skills is used both in primary and secondary, by our employer partners when they engage with the pupils and by the wider community e.g. sports clubs who also play an important part in our pupils’ skill development outwith school.* **Breadalbane Futures**

The formation of Breadalbane Futures has given more structure to partnership working in school and by collaborating closely with youth work, we have expanded our joint network of supportive employers. The core members of this group (Project Officer- DYW, SDS and Youth Work) are in weekly contact, meet regularly through 16+ meetings and currently join up with businesses virtually.Six local businesses have taken part in weekly career insight sessions until Easter 2021. In term four a group of targeted pupils will experience a period of mentoring and work experience. The next meeting with the businesses will include a presentation from local apprentices (last year’s school leavers) and an information session on the funding available through YPG, etc to enable employers to create new opportunities. |
| **What is the (intended) impact of your initiative/programme?** | * **How we do things here**

The key principles of our employer engagements are that partnerships should be deep and sustained and as a result form a fundamental pillar of our curriculum design and delivery. The should not be ‘bolt-on’ but rather an intrinsic feature of ‘how we do things here’. * **The whole child**

Our approach is predicated on the inter-connectedness of all aspects of our curriculum. We are unashamed about the fact we are developing the ‘whole child’ and preparing him or her for every aspect of their future life. Almost all preparations for employment are also preparations for life and vice versa. Our work on employability should not in any way stand separate to our wider educational mission but instead be intrinsic to it.* **Skills are who you are**

We want our young people to leave school with the skills they will require for life, and the ability to articulate and reflect upon these. We have taken a very broad definition of skills to include aspects which could also be described as attributes or outlooks. By this means, our ‘skill set’, aims to go beyond pupils just describing *what they can do*, but rather towards talking about *who they are*. Employers tell us time and again that it is this level of self-consciousness that they desire of potential employees. Developing metacognition in pupils, and indeed staff, is at the centre of everything we do. Pupils who can reflect on who they are and what they are doing, are the most likely to be successful in learning, life and work. * **Employers are part of the team**

Our partners should feel they are part of a team pursuing a shared purpose of turning out great citizens and employees. When employers are signed up to this vision, they should also feel they are investing their time to benefit themselves and their business as well as our pupils; the success of this can be seen in the number of businesses who immediately responded to our call to arms in the midst of a pandemic. Despite going through their own personal challenges in extremely difficult financial circumstances, they are working alongside us to make sure our local young people have a positive pathway beyond school.  |
| **What have you learnt from your journey so far** (any evaluative comments etc.) | * Spending time planning across the whole curriculum using a range of employment sectors is a worthwhile investment; it reduces duplication and ensures that employer engagements are meaningful and scheduled at appropriate times within the school year.
* Partnerships work best and the potential benefits to the school and the business are maximised when they are managed at a strategic level.
* The implementation of agreements allows for better planning and goes some way towards future-proofing the delivery of DYW strategy & Career Standard within school in part through minimising the potential impact of change of personnel both within the school and in the partner business.
* A common language for skills development helps to bridge the divide between school and the workplace. Spending the time to get this right and fully consulting employers at the development stage made our partners feel valued and increased their confidence in the part they play in our pupils’ overall development
* Having a member of staff – our Project Officer - specifically employed to develop and maintain employer partnerships has been an invaluable deployment of resource. This provides dedicated time for this vital partnership working.
* Investing 4 years in nurturing relationships and building trust with employer partners and everyone connected to 16+ has resulted in better outcomes for our pupils during an extremely challenging year.
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| **Skills/DYW** | DYW activities in school have been greatly enhanced by the implementation of the Skills Wheel and a strong focus on skills development across the whole school.Sharing this with all our partners and the wider community has supported pupils in their ability to understand how these skills fit into their chosen career path as well as how they are developing them through every activity they take part in.The wheel format removes any hierarchical element and means that every skill is seen as equally valuable.  |
| **Partnerships (**employers, industry, organisations etc.) | Prioritising relationships enabled the school to really get to know the local business community. Good communication with Principal Teachers developed an understanding of each subject department and enabled meaningful partnerships to be developed with a common purpose and mutual benefit. 3-5 year ‘partnership agreements’ with employers provide structure and clarity. They help to ensure that engagements are well-planned on both sides, that they are relevant to the curriculum and transfer knowledge and expertise from industry to classroom and vice-versa.  Strategic partnership working has facilitated better planning and more appropriate input. This approach has enabled departments to improve the courses offered and introduce/develop vocational courses. |
| **Best piece of advice (**what others would really benefit from knowing) | * Use the method “Create, Manage, Sustain, Develop.” This will lead to stronger partnership work which is relevant to curriculum, specific to the local job market and ensures value on both sides. Crucially, this allows the opportunity for reflection and enhancements to the programme as the partnership develops.
* Where possible design engagements that are interactive. It’s more difficult, but that’s how the exchange of knowledge and experience really takes place.
* Agree and promote an energising vision that all stakeholders can ‘buy into’ which sets out fundamentally what you are about as a school.
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| **Standards and guidance materials** | Did you use any of the following documents in preparation or alongside the development of this project:[Career Education Standard](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/CareerEducationStandard0915_tcm4-869208.pdf)✓[Work Placements Standard](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/WorkPlacementStandard0915_tcm4-870517.pdf)✓[School/Employer Partnership Guidance](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningandteaching/thecurriculum/dyw/schoolemployerpartnerships/index.asp) ✓ |
| **Watch this space!** (where we are going next!) | Where possible we would like to build work-based qualifications into the Breadalbane Futures Programme. A Coffee Academy has been already been developed with this in mind, and we hope to use this as a model which can be replicated across other employment sectors. |
| **Quotation(s)** (eg. head of establishments, Local authority representative, young person, parent etc.) | “The school actively encourages pupils to engage with the world of work in all areas and interests. These happen at every age and stage of their school career, giving pupils a wide breadth of ideas and inspiration. The students at Breadalbane are not just learning to pass exams but gaining relevant knowledge and experience for the world of work." Parent of 3 pupils“Breadalbane Academy has opened their doors to business, actively seeking our involvement and looking for new and interesting ways to use our expertise to support the already rich educational experience. I like the experimental, what can we do differently attitude of Breadalbane; no idea is dismissed. “John Duncan, Performance Consultant, Aviva UK“I feel a lot more confident and sure about my future”, S6 Pupil“The main benefit is actually talking to people about life after school”, S4 Pupil |

**3. Added value**

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| **Resources**  |  |
| **Web links** | [A Learner's Journey Through STEM at Breadalbane Academy SLF2019](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=li-IfcY4r4s)[Academy 9 Apprenticeship Academy](file:///%5C%5Cp-BACFS01%5CBACStaffdat%24%5CDeveloping%20the%20Young%20Workforce%5CAcademy9_Sept2017_Final.mp4)[Birks Bag Company - Enterprising Schools](https://enterprisingschools.scot/portfolio-item/breadalbane-academy-birks-bag-company/)[Glen Lyon Coffee Academy Article](https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/local-news/coffee-academy-give-school-leavers-23406866)[Marine Scotland Research Partnership HT Development Day](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YCJJdo2VY4g&feature=youtu.be)[Breadalbane Academy Interactive Skills Wheel](https://xd.adobe.com/view/f6ec1fa9-0da8-4087-6a68-c91aecff782f-80dd/?fullscreen)[Breadalbane Academy Careers Event 2020 review](https://issuu.com/heartlandfm/docs/careers_day_land_1)[Scotland's Most Enterprising School 2020](https://enterprisingschools.scot/news/our-most-enterprising-school-of-the-year-2020-scoo-11-08-2020) |
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