

Grantham pupils bringing history to life



Students in Grantham are embracing work-based learning by becoming the first in the country to opt for a vocational qualification in lieu of traditional GCSE History.

18 pupils at Grantham Church (VA) High School are completing an NVQ in Museums, Galleries and Heritage from leading awarding body EDI.

Supported by Grantham Museum, which is run by Lincolnshire County Council, the students have taken part-time front-of-house positions to gain the experience required to complete the qualification.

Equivalent to six GCSEs, the Level 2

NVQ gives a thorough grounding in heritage and dealing with visitors. The five mandatory units for completion include providing assistance to visitors and implementing emergency procedures. Students also select two optional units from a range of relevant topics including creating displays and exhibitions and providing guided tours.

Gill Wright, Head of Humanities at Grantham Church (VA) High School, said: "Locally there are high levels of unemployment so it is vital that we encourage students to develop skills in areas such as customer service, health and safety and working effectively with colleagues which will provide a solid foundation for the world of work.

"The NVQ format appealed to both academic students who opted to take it alongside their other options, and those who were disengaged with exams and coursework yet still keen to learn about History.

Trevor Meakin, EDI Vocational Qualification Consultant, said: "As the only awarding body offering Heritage vocational qualifications, we have worked in partnership with the school and museum to ensure the content reflects the day-to-day demands of working in the Culture and Heritage sector."

As part of their role at the museum the students will assist with the forthcoming Spirit of Christmas event on 29 November.

Stephanie Gilluly, Regeneration Manager at Lincolnshire County Council, said: "Feedback from our visitors and museum staff has been extremely positive so we are delighted that the students are benefitting from this structured work experience and opportunity to put their knowledge of History into practice.

"We'd also like to thank Renaissance East Midlands for funding this project which has been delivered by our Workforce Development Team."

Luke Scott (age 16) is set to be one of the first of the Year 11 students to complete the Heritage qualification. Luke said "I am really enjoying the course; it has allowed me to learn about history without writing long essays and has given me lots of skills that will help me to get a job anywhere."

"Museums are much more interesting than I originally thought. I have helped to put up exhibitions and have really enjoyed helping at educational events for children. I would recommend the course to other students and hope to get a job in a museum. I never thought I would be saying that."