

Athersley South Primary School

Event Focus	General. No specific focus on specific jobs apart from raising aspirations/linking learning in school to the world of work, although looking specifically for volunteers from careers that my children would tend not to come across or even be aware of.
Communication with volunteers	Initial communication was through the Inspiring the Futures website. Having registered and logged in then through the 'Find Volunteers' tab. Having communicated via the website later communications were via email avoiding the character restriction. I asked interested volunteers to send me their email addresses then created a new group. Copies of initial communication and other emails attached to this case study in Appendix 1
School organisation of our PF events	Having one person lead and manage the event was very important. We planned two pilot events using similar models for both whilst using experience from the first afternoon to modify the second. We wanted volunteers to work with small groups of up to 10 children for approximately an hour. The children were Y5/6 from two classes. Each group of children had one member of staff from school working with them and the volunteer. Each of the two afternoons had 3 volunteers and 3 groups of children who stayed with the volunteer for the session.
Our volunteers	We identified 6 volunteers to join us for our initial 2 afternoon pilots. A further 6 are going to be working with us later this year on a modified version of these. The initial 6 in the pilot had the following jobs – paramedic, solicitor, cookery book writer, head of HR in a multi-national company, health and safety coordinator and a journalist. It was really important to do some pre pilot work so the volunteers were clear about our expectations and felt as comfortable as possible. Email communications were crucial but we also spoke to them all individually by phone. Each was encouraged to bring with them something they could share with the children relating to their job. 3 of the volunteers chose to use a presentation or quiz which they shared with us prior to the event.
The event/s	We found the key to a successful event was to make sure the children were fully prepared with a series of possible questions. The member of staff was aware of their role in encouraging and supporting and ensuring that the volunteers were made more than welcome. On arrival volunteers were met at the school entrance then having completed the necessary safeguarding paperwork were escorted to the office for a chance to meet key staff, other volunteers and have refreshments. We did offer a tour of the school to those who either could arrive early or wanted to stay later. 4 volunteers were able to do this – all before the event. This was useful as they got a feel for the school, the children and our expectations.

During refreshments we had a further opportunity to chat about the format of the sessions and to sort out any unanswered questions.

The 3 areas we were going to use were already set up with presentations preloaded where appropriate. All other equipment was to hand including iPads and newspapers.

Once the volunteers were introduced to the children it was over to them!

Feedback and impact

As an important part of the events we requested feedback from the volunteers, the children and the staff, some of which is listed below in Appendix 2. It became clear very quickly that Primary Futures in our school is not a one off event but the start of a planned series of activities. It was fascinating seeing how the majority of the children were inspired by what they saw and heard. Even weeks after the events they still talk about it and from our point of view the fact they can now see a real link between their learning in school and their futures is a massive plus.

We also took a number of photographs which we also sent to the volunteers and had a complete section on our website related to Primary Futures. The local media were also very interested and we had good coverage from them which was also picked up by other schools whilst also providing good PR for us!

What could we improve on or develop

Try a carousel model where the children did shorter slots for up to 30 minutes but had chance to experience the 3 volunteers. The children raised this as an issue.

For our next event we are also looking at the possibility of larger groups to involve more children not only Y5/6 but also Y3/4 and KS1 or a combination of models.

Have name badges for the children particularly when working in small groups. Examine the possibility of having a member of staff as the Primary Futures coordinator and plan a series of events across a whole school year.

Appendix 1

1. Initial message to volunteers from Inspiring the Future Website

Dear Colleague

I am emailing you on behalf of the staff and children at Athersley South Primary School in Barnsley, S71 3TP. You can find out more about us on our website at www.athersleysouthprimary.net

Our school serves a community of high unemployment which we are determined to play our part in improving by preparing our children for the challenges of life ahead. Although our children are still at Primary School we are very clear that aspirations can be raised even at such an early age.

We are planning a series of afternoon events week beginning February 3rd where we are inviting colleagues from the world outside school to spend an hour or so of their time in school talking and sharing their experiences with 10 and 11 year old children.

Please see the brief attachment which provides more information. If the link doesn't work please let me know! I look forward to hearing from you

Regards

2. Message response to 16 respondents via Inspiring the Future website

Dear All

Thanks for taking the time to reply to my initial email sent on Monday this week. I am out of school today and tomorrow but plan to complete some draft thinking on our plans over the weekend which I will forward early next week for your comments. We are very keen to take on board your views as we develop what promises to be an exciting series of events

Regards

3. Message update ahead of planning our events in school requesting email addresses

Dear All

Further to my message sent via the Inspiring the Futures website I am planning to send out an update later this weekend via email. As you all so kindly responded to my initial contact it would be helpful if you could send me your email address if you are still potentially interested so I can let you know more about our draft thinking.

Thanks

4. Attachment sent via group email outlining our plans

Dear All

Further to my initial contact via the Inspiring the Future website as promised I am providing you with more background information about Primary Futures and the events we are planning at Athersley South Primary next month.

You can find out more about us at www.athersleysouthprimary.net as I mentioned previously.

I am guessing that most of you signed up as volunteers expecting that you might have the opportunity to do some volunteering probably in secondary schools around careers education, which is where Inspiring the Future tends to focus.

Primary Futures is a little different although currently uses the Inspiring the Futures messaging system and data base.

If you do have time please have a look at the website at <http://www.inspiringthefuture.org/schools-colleges/primary-schools.aspx> There is also information about the project, which is still in its pilot phase, and what we are aiming to achieve.

Essentially this is a Primary School model, delivered by the Education and Employers Taskforce and the National Association of Headteachers, which aims to raise the aspirations of our children by focussing not only on the world of work our volunteers are in but also on the importance of having good skills in literacy and numeracy. We are hoping volunteers will feel able to share not only how important these skills were in school but also how they remain equally important (or more so) in their current roles. For many children, particularly those from more challenging backgrounds, helping them to realise there is a world beyond their locality is not easy. Trying to demonstrate in practical terms how what they learn in school relates to their futures is where Primary Futures comes in.

As one of 16 pilot schools across England we are tasked with testing out ideas to see what works well, what doesn't and then to create one of a series of case studies which other schools who sign up to Primary Futures might want to try. There is however no one size fits all here! I am also really keen to find out how this works for yourselves as I see this as very much as a two way process with benefits for volunteers as well as the children. Your feedback and ideas will prove crucial as the project gathers pace.

So how will it work at Athersley South?

Based on your initial responses we are planning to invite volunteers in on one of three afternoons in February, Wednesday 5th, Thursday 6th and Tuesday 11th. If you are still interested in joining us but the

dates don't work please let me know and I will see what we can do. If you are able to offer an hour or so you would be most welcome to join me and some of my staff for refreshments etc from 1.30 pm. This will also give you an opportunity to hear more about the school, maybe have a quick tour and then spend 30 to 40 minutes or so with the children. Again this is flexible so we can provide more or less time depending on what suits you all best. We don't want to chase you away neither do we want to keep you any longer than you wish!

At this stage we envisage this being delivered to children in Year 6 (10 and 11 year olds) although depending on volunteer response we might drop into Year 5 (9 and 10 year olds). We would like to try small groups of approximately 10 children maximum but can be flexible if you would like more! If so please let me know. Please note each group will have a member of staff with them to support you. In terms of what you choose to do I have outlined above the project aims and the links between school, literacy, numeracy, the world of work and raising aspirations. You might want to just chat to the children in an informal way or do a presentation. You might of course want to bring something along to show our children to fire their imagination and enthusiasm. I have no doubt that whatever approach you choose they will have lots to ask you! Primary age children love welcoming in visitors.

We can provide ICT facilities with smart boards, iPads and also have wifi but I am always slightly nervous of its reliability so tend to recommend USB sticks! Please do feel free to contact me beforehand if you want to chat about your plans or you want any advice.

One of the things we have picked up from a couple of the early pilots is that some volunteers see this as a one off opportunity whilst others perhaps as potentially the start of a longer relationship. We are equally enthusiastic either way!

Just to let you know on at least one of the afternoons there will be media interest from both the local press and also a journalist and photographer attached to the NAHT who are doing an article on Primary Futures in our March/April magazine to members. If you want to avoid this please let me know and I will ensure you do of course it could be very positive for your company etc!

Once you have had time to read this could you please let me know if you are still able to join us and if so which days are best for you. If you decide this is not for you your feedback would still be really helpful to us all.

*Please do feel free to contact me via this email if any questions spring to mind or ring me at school
Regards*

5. Final email sent to the volunteers who were on the initial pilots

Dear All

Thanks so much for managing to find the time to join the children on either the 6th or 11th February to test the water as part of our Primary Futures pilot. I hope you don't mind me including you all on this attachment saves time!

Below I have set out a provisional timetable for the two dates which I hope works for you. Feel free to contact me anytime either via email or phone on 01226 284223 to discuss any of the details, to seek clarification or indeed to chat about your plans. I will be ringing a couple of you this week for a chat as previously agreed.

As I have mentioned this is a pilot and as such there is no blueprint although hopefully I can make notes on what went well and what needs to be looked at again. Your thoughts and the thoughts of the children and staff will all prove invaluable in getting this right before the national launch in May. I have also attached a Primary Futures flyer which has not yet been released, which gives you a bit more information about the project and our aims. I am really interested in seeing how you can communicate to the children how literacy and numeracy are so important in your world and how their

work on these key areas in schools fits in to their futures. Raising aspirations is a real area of challenge for us at Athersley South.

If you do want to send us any information in advance re. what you are planning please feel free to do so. Thanks to those who already have.

I haven't yet finalised details with the staff but it is likely there will be three groups of between 10 and 15 children on each of the two afternoons. If you would prefer 10 please let me know. Each group will be primed to think about some questions but they will know very little about what your job involves so I guess that's a good starting point for you all. You will find our children very engaging and enthusiastic (I hope!). I will make sure the staff have seen your profiles on the Inspiring the Future website and also any information you have sent me.

As mentioned previously there may well be a reporter and photographer around as this will feature in the National Association of Headteachers March/April magazine. They may also be keen to chat to some of you if you're willing. I'm also hoping to persuade the local press but who knows!

We are hoping to start the sessions with the children at approximately 1.45pm on both afternoons running till about 2.30/45pm. This can be flexible however and be either longer or shorter to suit your thinking. You are very welcome to arrive any time after 1.00pm for a coffee and a chance to have a chat and look round if that fits in. You are also welcome to stay longer again if that fits in for you. It would be really helpful if you can confirm that you are still able to join us, with approximate timings and any details of what you would like us to provide in terms of iPads, smartboards etc.

February 6th	February 11th
Cath	Meryl
Jeff	Mike
Alex	Lauren

If I have missed anything or not provided you with enough information please do not hesitate to let me know.

Regards

Appendix 2 - A selection of quotes

From the volunteers –

I was delighted to help and thoroughly enjoyed meeting your children and some of the teachers. I was a little nervous but they are a good bunch and helped put me at ease. Happy to help in the future in anyway.

Hi Steve - thanks for giving me the opportunity to speak at your school today and for making me so welcome. I hope the children enjoyed my session - I certainly did!

As I mentioned before, I'm happy to stay involved, but will take my lead from you as to what form you'd like that involvement to take. I did tell the kids that if they'd like to write up their stories and make a school newspaper, I'd love to see a copy and I'd give them feedback.

We both thought the event was really positive and can't wait for another opportunity.

We think the event was pitched at the correct level and age group because it gave us an opportunity to engage at a time when the children are just at the point of starting very important exams and are probably at the correct age to at least start thinking about what they might want to do in the future

Having the informal, though structured, discussion with the children enabled them to make their own links with the 'real world' application of the skills they are learning particularly in relation to Maths and English, it also makes it clear to them that they aren't just learning things to pass exams, they are skills that can and will be used in the future

It was important that we adopted the approach to make the session interactive because otherwise we think we could have come across as preaching at them, at the end of the day it's about them and their own learning experience and not us talking at them.

Having something to take away with them at the end and an interactive activity (with a bit of competition thrown in !!) really left them on a positive and will no doubt have generated further discussions after we left

We were really impressed with the children's enthusiasm, energy and willing participation. Some of the questions they asked and the responses they gave to our questions were inspired and I hope that we got the message over about the importance of literacy and numeracy. We are going to drop in some Patient Report Forms (PRFs) so that Miss S can continue some work with the children in relation to neat writing, form filling etc.

I was delighted that the children asked if I could come again and would be happy to be involved further if you feel that is appropriate. The children were well behaved, polite and a credit to the school throughout and we would be pleased if you could let the children know how much we enjoyed meeting them.

From the children

The afternoon was amazing and I learnt lots of new things! I never knew there was a job as a data journalist. I love maths so maybe this could be for me!

The afternoon was fab. I spent lots of time looking at the news and thinking about how I could be a journalist. Thanks to all the volunteers for a special day.

The afternoon was mind blowing. It inspired me to become a journalist and to really work hard to improve my literacy.

The afternoon was really spectacular. I learnt all about what the paramedics do and why I need good maths, reading and literacy skills.

I can see that the things I learn in school really can be useful when I get older.

I want to try to be a solicitor but now I know I need to make my handwriting better if I want to become one.

From the staff

The children were all left engaged and buzzing after the volunteers had shared their experiences and lines of work. The children were excited to write news reports and wanted to be journalists for the day! The link between learning in primary school and the world of work was made very clearly.

Very worthwhile and valuable experience. The children were able to see the links between literacy and numeracy and real life work and had great fun doing so!

A thoroughly enjoyable afternoon. It made our children realise that school is all about what happens in their future and not just now!

The volunteers were so enthusiastic and well briefed. They had obviously spent a lot of time thinking about their chats and presentations. They managed to make the link between learning in school and the children's futures very clearly. Mission accomplished!