

CASE STUDY

ADI GROUP: ENHANCING LEARNING IN SCHOOLS

This case study outlines the partnership between adi Group and North Bromsgrove High School.

Background

adi Group developed a partnership with North Bromsgrove High School through Business in the Community's Business Class programme in 2016. In 2018, Ofsted judged the school as 'Inadequate'; student attendance was below the national average and the school was struggling to fill places. The leadership of the school was tasked by Ofsted to improve their performance. adi Group worked with teachers and students and continued to invest time and resources to help them improve. In 2019, the school was able to move the Ofsted judgement up to 'Requires Improvement' after implementing a range of improvements.

One of the ways adi Group has been able to support the school is to contribute to the range of pathways the schools provide to pupils to ensure all students can thrive and reach their potential. All 13-year-old students have the opportunity to apply for the adi Group Pre-apprenticeship route. Students who are less academic tend to be attracted to the route due to the emphasis upon developing practical engineering skills and the work-related learning experience provided. The adi Group Pre-apprenticeship scheme is included



alongside other post-16 destination pathways offered by the school.

What did adi Group do

The adi Group Pre-apprenticeship scheme was created in collaboration with North Bromsgrove High School. Over two years, students study and develop practical skills in both electrical and mechanical engineering at Level 1 (Foundation Course).

The students make weekly three-hour visits to adi Group for practical learning and mentoring sessions with adi Group employees. The students build a portfolio of evidence for their qualification. Between visits to adi Group, the students also spend two or three hours per week at school practicing new skills with their teacher and peer group. Students can:

- Make components using hand tools
- Learn how to use and communicate technical information
- Experience cutting, bending, forming, drilling, and welding of various metals
- Assemble electrical circuits and wiring control panels

There are four modules for students to complete over the two-year programme. After each module, the students complete a practical and written test, which is assessed by adi Group mentors and set by the awarding body. Finally, the students take part in a synoptic assessment, where the student has to demonstrate all the skills and knowledge they have developed over the two-year period. Passing the course means that students can then apply to be 'fast tracked' on to the adi Group full-time apprenticeship programme without needing to undertake the standard recruitment process for the scheme.

Whilst adi Group require applicants to achieve Level 4/Grade C in Maths and English, for those who have not yet reached the level but have impressed adi Group during the Pre-apprenticeship scheme, this does not present a barrier to progression onto the post-16 apprenticeship.

For students who successfully pass the scheme but do not reach the industry standard requirements in Maths and English, adi Group supports students to continue to work towards the required standard. For adi Group, the young person has already demonstrated the right attitude and aptitude to make a success of the apprenticeship so there is confidence the student will also achieve the required standard in Maths and English with some additional studying.

'SOME OF THE STUDENTS WHO COME THROUGH THE PROGRAMME COME FROM DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS, THEY MAY NOT BE ACADEMIC, THEY MAY NOT GET MANY OTHER QUALIFICATIONS AND IT IS A HUGE SENSE OF ACHIEVEMENT TO SEE THEM PASS THE COURSE. WE'VE NEVER HAD ANYONE JUST PASS – OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS - STUDENTS HAVE GAINED DISTINCTIONS OR MERITS SO I

THINK THAT IS WHAT MOTIVATES ME.'

Roy Cumberworth, adi Group mentor

ADI APPRENTICE GROWTH

With apprentices now representing over 7% of their 650 plus workforce, adi Group are keen to continue to plug the engineering skills gap by creating a talent pipeline and continue to recruit this way. adi Group's workforce is projected to grow beyond 1,000 in the next 3-4 years providing the opportunity to employ over 60 apprentices across the business.

18-year-old Abbie Beaver, who successfully came through the pre-apprenticeship scheme was named among the Women's Engineering Society's top 50 UK female engineers. She said *"I really enjoyed the scheme and coming to the adi site every week. It has given me so much insight into the engineering profession which I didn't have before and I can't wait to start my career."*

Process of co-creation and development

Choosing the right qualification

Finding a qualification which worked for both parties was critical to the sustainability of the programme. adi Group and the school worked to identify a qualification which was both recognised by the Department for Education - thus contributing to school's accountability measure - whilst also providing adi Group with the skills they need as a pre-requisite for their apprenticeship scheme post-16 or Level 2 (or equivalent to one GCSE).

Creation of the programme content

The qualification syllabus provides a framework for content which was a helpful guide for adi Group to use and build the programme. adi Group asked one of their graduates to write the programme material in conjunction with the school. The school also validates the students'

work against the qualification requirements. Following the syllabus requirements, adi Group utilises skills and knowledge examples specifically relevant to their business so they know the students are developing what is needed to work at adi Group.

adi Group mentors

adi Group mentors teach some of the content in their workshop whilst other content is taught at school. adi Group mentors mark on-going assessments and these are then verified by the teacher. The final synoptic assessment was created by adi Group and verified as meeting the required standard by the engineering and manufacturing qualification body.

Recent developments

Responding to student feedback

To ensure the safety of students participating in the scheme, adi Group begins the programme with comprehensive training in Health and Safety relevant to the course such as signage, fire evacuation, risk assessments, and safe use of basic hand tools. This used to take six weeks to complete, and the students did find this process quite onerous and heavy going. Responding to feedback, adi Group reduced the time by ensuring that core Health and Safety content is covered whilst integrating practical sessions over the course of the two years.

Creation of workbooks

Overtime, lead staff have changed at North Bromsgrove High School. To support new lead teachers who are taking accountability for the programme, adi Group has pulled all of the PowerPoint Presentations and workbooks together so the teacher has complete oversight of what is being taught and where the school input is critical. This has enabled continuity in the delivery of the programme. Each student has their own pre-apprentice book and assessment book where all their scores and progress is documented

Dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic

During the pandemic, additional control measures were put in place to keep students, staff and adi Group employees safe. Complying with government guidelines and keeping students separate from the rest of adi Group employees, the students were still able to visit adi Group weekly. Whilst schools have been open, the programme has continued in the new normal.

Outcomes and impact

Since 2016, 50 students have been through the programme. All students passed the scheme either achieving a merit or a distinction. adi Group have employed eight Pre-apprentices into the their apprentice academy and all have stayed.

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