

## **Telford pupils urged to take the languages plunge**

Pupils at Lord Silkin School in Telford were encouraged to keep their options open recently when they were visited by a local businesswoman as part of a programme to increase language skills awareness.

Lucy Theaker, managing partner at executive search firm, Snowdon Tate, which is part of the TRANSEARCH international network, visited the school on 10 November 2008 to speak with seventy-two Year 9 students about the importance of language skills for increased work and travel opportunities.

Lucy, who has run a scuba diving school in Nicaragua and spent part of her career in Paris, recounted her experiences of living and working abroad to persuade students that learning languages can be fun and give them the edge over their peers in the employment market.

This project is part of the Business Language Champions programme, which is co-ordinated by Regional Language Network West Midlands (RLN WM). It is designed to bridge the gap between school and the workplace and to reverse the recent decline in the take up of modern foreign languages. The 'Champions' bring language skills alive by highlighting the problems local companies have recruiting staff that can speak more than one language and helping pupils to see how important these skills are in the workplace.

The school has recently experienced a drop in languages uptake and head of languages, Nathalie Jeavons, is hopeful Lucy's input can turn things around, she said:

"We are hopeful that Lucy's visit can act as a catalyst for improving languages uptake at the school but know we need to build upon this by showing students that language skills are advantageous in almost any profession."

Lucy Theaker, a committee member of the Young Directors Forum, part of the Institute of Directors, was pleased with the response from students:

"I was delighted to share my experiences of using languages throughout my business life as I've found languages to be a key differentiator. I hope that I've managed to persuade the students that pursuing a language will be beneficial to them irrespective of the career paths they choose."

Frances Pallett, BLC Project Manager from the RLN West Midlands, added:

"Lucy is a great example of how language skills can enrich your life, both financially and personally and I would urge other business people with a passion for languages to get involved with their local school and spread the message that languages are a great way to advance your career."

Business Language Champions is a nationwide programme, supported by the Department for Children, Skills and Families (DCSF), which aims to bridge the gap between school and the workplace and increase foreign languages uptake.

Lord Silkin School is an 11-16 comprehensive school based in Stirchley, Telford.

For further information on Regional Language Network West Midlands visit [www.rln-westmidlands.com](http://www.rln-westmidlands.com).

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Caption: Lucy Theaker with pupils from Lord Silkin School.

*Issued by Regional Language Network West Midlands. Media contact is Frances Pallett on 0121 329 3297 or 07789 116818*

#### **Notes to editors**

The Regional Language Network West Midlands helps businesses and individuals to overcome language and cultural barriers and provides a 'first-point-of-contact' for all language and culture-related queries in the region.