

January 2006

Kingswinford School Presentation

In a change to our normal tradition, the 2006 programme was launched by a presentation by two pupils from Kingswinford School, Daniel Davenport and Jenny Smith. Jenny and Daniel had taken part in the 2005 BHSEA Schools Health and Safety Initiative, in conjunction with the World Class Leadership and Management Project.

Six Schools took part in a work experience project and presented their results afterwards at Old Swinford Hospital School. Jenny and Daniel spent their time in Kennametal and carried out risk assessments in various departments in order to devise an Induction Booklet for Work Experience Students.

Jenny and Daniel were supported at the AGM by their Headteacher, Peter Limb and Simon Eason, Quality and Assurance Manager at Kennametal.

Peter gave a brief introduction to the students and the history of the work experience project, whilst Simon gave us a background to the firm's activities in the Machine Tool business. He went on to describe the importance of addressing the problems faced by local pupils undertaking work experience projects for the first time. The Secretary, Andy Chappell, described the lead up to the project, with a preparatory briefing on the scope of Health and Safety Law, reinforced by an accident case study to outline the principles of risk assessment. After the presentation at the Old Swinford Hospital School, following the projects, Andy said that all the participants showed great enthusiasm for the project and the fact that they were producing something to be put to practical use, in their host firms. Although it was not a competitive venture, differences were apparent between the presentations and the combination of a clearly defined methodology and a very attractive presentation style recommended the presentation from Kingswinford School for our AGM.

Daniel started the presentation by describing the twin objectives to produce an Induction Booklet for students on work experience and a training checklist for the use of the supervisor in charge of the department. Jenny went on to emphasise the importance of addressing the specific areas of the work activities where students were to be placed and listed all of these to ensure complete coverage. Dealing a little more deeply with the areas in question, Daniel said that safe access was one of the earliest considerations. He described the Manufacturing workshop and talked about the need for signs on machinery to be obeyed, chemicals to be avoided and swarf to be carefully handled because it was so sharp!

Jenny told us that the Engineering Section presented a slightly different set of hazards, as it was mainly office-based. She had noticed that people ignored wires on the floor and that there was a need to obey warning signs, beware items blocking paths and repair uneven floors. Moving on to the Warehouse, Daniel remarked that there were some heavy objects on top shelves and that there were significant risks from forklift truck operations and with the use of step-stools and ladders. Jenny then dealt with the Customer Services office where, again, there was a problem with cables, only this time it was caused by fraying on the printer/fax machine connections. Interestingly, she also commented on risk from lifting of heavy items and the limited space between desks, which resulted in a movement problem.

Daniel continued by looking at the General Safety Rules for the firm, which covered Emergency Safety Procedures, Reception access, Workwear as well as Protective Equipment and compliance with warning signs around the site. The control measures were underpinned by a map of the site showing the hazardous areas that were 'out-of-bounds'. Jenny observed that there were also related Environmental issues, such as segregation of waste into Red, Green and Yellow bins for collection of Cardboard/Paper, Oily Rags or anything covered in oil, and General Waste, respectively. Prevention of Pollution was important, with a ban on pouring chemicals down drains, as was Energy Saving with reminders for staff to switch off equipment, machinery and lights when they were not in use.

Daniel and Jenny concluded their presentation with a display of a very professionally produced, easy-to-read leaflet containing the end result of their labours – a "Health and Safety Booklet for Work Experience Students" They added some observations that they had learnt from this project that health and safety was important because, if it the business's main aim, then it would cut down on staff sick leave, reduce lawsuits and reduce insurance premiums. But, more than that, on a personal level, they felt that they had developed their communication skills and now had a much deeper understanding of how a business operates. They rounded off the presentation six Kennametal staff from all levels in the firm for their help in completing the project.

Chairman, Warwick Adams thanked the students for a very professional presentation and commented that some our speakers over the months could have learnt a thing or two from their presentation! The audience obviously agreed with this judgement when they gave a hearty round of applause afterwards.

Secretary's Note:

(After the presentation at the meeting, Daniel and Jenny were given a special Commemorative Certificate to be contained in their School Record of Achievement from BHSEA. Daniel and Jenny demonstrated a very structured approach to the project and this showed through admirably in their presentation. Their PowerPoint presentation, and the Induction Training booklet they produced for Work Experience students, both showed the same high degree of professionalism.)

BHSEA is keeping up its contact with the Schools to maintain a Health and Safety input into the curriculum and we hope to develop the initiative in future years. The Management committee has agreed to offer the schools concerned free membership of BHSEA for 12 months.