

BETHANY'S STORY

TURNING DREAMS INTO REALITY

Industry placements are a key part of the new T Level qualifications, designed with employers to give young people the knowledge and skills industry needs. Organisations of all sizes and sectors are working with education and training providers to run industry placements now in readiness for the roll out of T Levels from September 2020 onwards.

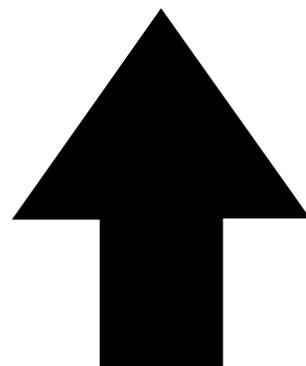


Tracey Leslie, Deputy Manager of Dream Catchers Day Nursery in Rotherham, is a strong advocate for industry placements, seeing them as a great way to bring new talent into the sector whilst also providing consistency for the children.

"A 45-day industry placement is ten times better than a short two-week work experience. It gives employers the chance to mould the students into the practitioner they want them to be and it also allows the children to get to know and trust the students, which is really beneficial for their development."

Bethany (pictured above), a student from Thomas Rotherham College, was thrilled to be chosen by Tracey to do her industry placement at Dream Catchers. Her experience has also helped her decide to go to university to become an early years educator.

"An industry placement is the best thing you can do. My confidence has increased in college and in all parts of my life, and now I know that this is definitely the career I want to do."



During her placement Bethany helped both design and lead sessions for the children, putting her college learning into practice. As she was at the nursery for a day each week she soon felt part of the team working with colleagues and supporting the children.

"The longer placement has allowed me to build relationships with the children, including those who were shy and withdrawn at first. It's been so rewarding to see them come out of their shell and know that I have helped them to grow in confidence."

Being on placement also allowed Bethany to meet and interact with people from different backgrounds, helping her to develop her communication skills.

"Some of the parents don't speak English as a first language and some of the children have taught me words that help me communicate with their parents. This has helped me understand and communicate with people from different backgrounds."

Cerise Walters, Careers and Employer Engagement Manager at Thomas Rotherham College, has seen the benefits of industry placements to all her students.

"Being mentored by a professional is really beneficial as it gives students live feedback on their practice and lets them develop their professional capabilities, meaning the student grows and improves their vocational skills. It also gives students a strong professional reference. From the employer's perspective, it helps them to develop a strong talent pipeline which saves them time and money down the line."

Back at Dream Catchers, Tracy wouldn't hesitate to recommend industry placements to anyone in the education and childcare sector.

"I feel it's the only way the sector can move forward. The students get to learn the job and truly understand what it entails, which means you have a low staff turnover, which is great for the children. It also means the sector has a more skilled workforce."

Bethany is now working at the nursery part-time as a member of staff while she completes her course and continues her journey to university.

For more about T Levels and industry placements visit gov.uk/dfe/t-levels

