

WORKING WITH SCHOOLS

Since we began five years ago, our commitment to working with schools has grown significantly. We now work in direct partnership with many schools as well as using our expertise to support other business & school partnerships. Gi Group UK has already helped more than 800 pupils prepare for the world of work – with that number set to rise over the coming years.

Beth Henson who helps deliver many of our programmes in schools talks about her experiences.



Name

BETH HENSON

Job Title

**REGIONAL ACCOUNT MANAGER
– SITE MANAGED SERVICES (SMS)
FOOD DIVISION**

Employer

Gi GROUP UK

Location

NOTTINGHAM

Q1 When did you first get involved in working with schools?

I became involved in working with schools about six years ago while working at Gi Group UK. I have supported many company CSR projects with primary and secondary schools across the UK.

The number of hours I spend on these types of projects each month has dramatically increased over the years as has the number of schools and pupils we work with.

Q2 What sort of activities has Gi Group UK been involved in since then?

Gi Group UK has provided staff to support and host a wide range of events.

We have hosted CV writing workshops and mock interview sessions, provided work experience placements, designed and delivered two day Management & Leadership masterclasses, created garden kitchens and nature areas, completed DIY and building repairs, participated in sports days, attended career events and facilitated tours of our clients' working environments... to name but a few!

Q3 What do you gain from investing your time in this way?

I find that volunteering and working with pupils at these schools is so rewarding and adds a real sense of satisfaction to my "day job".

Gi Group UK is fully committed to its CSR policy and actively encourages employees to volunteer across the whole of our business.

Q4 What impact have you seen these activities have on pupils and staff?

I have seen how some of these projects have positively impacted on raising pupils' aspirations; we have had feedback from the schools that our sessions have made a lasting and positive difference to the way in which the pupils have acted and engaged while at school.

It is so rewarding to see the benefit of our activities, to see how we are able to make

a difference to some pupils' lives and watch their progress through the years as we support and mentor them.

Q5 What recommendations would you make to an organisation which is considering supporting local schools?

Firstly, invest time in building a relationship with the school and establish a clear understanding of what both organisations wish to get out of the partnership – what are the benefits to the school and business to ensure expectations are met.

There are a lot of small projects that can have a high impact on the pupils for very little cost to the business.

My recommendation to volunteers is to be yourself and listen to the pupils; encourage them to be themselves from the time you are with them – their personalities soon shine through.

Q6 What does 'responsible business' mean to you?

To me it means working for a company that is committed to making a positive difference to young people and supporting them in their journey into the world of work.

I believe businesses can play a huge role in raising pupils' aspirations and dispelling the myth that a person's background predicts their future. It doesn't.