

## Redditch MD on Language Campaign Trail!

Languages and language options are a hot issue for Dean Attwell, MD of Redditch-based storage and logistics company, Oakland International Ltd, so much so that Dean has taken his message back to the classroom in an effort to encourage students about to choose their GCSE options, to choose a language.

Working with a host of manufacturers and retailers worldwide, it is essential Oakland International staff have multilingual skills and at times, the company has used other nationalities to assist, utilising French employees who speak English. With an expanding international client portfolio, Dean is passionate this situation is reversed, which is why he is happy to support a Redditch school, St Augustine's Catholic High School, in their commitment to language learning by organising projects and opportunities for pupils to see the benefits of languages in a business setting.

The project is part of the Business Language Champions programme, which is co-ordinated by Regional Language Network, West Midlands (RLN WM), and funded by the Department for Education and Skills. It is designed to bridge the gap between school and the workplace. The 'Champions' bring language skills alive by demonstrating how they are used on a day-to-day basis such as letters, emails, delivery notes. They also conduct site visits and take in work placements.

Dean, with support from Oakland's business development and project coordinator Peter Vaughan, conducted an inaugural presentation to the school's Year 9 pupils on 23<sup>rd</sup> February, calling on other companies to highlight the benefits of speaking a foreign language. Dean commented: "Other countries such as China recognise the importance of having additional languages and are exploiting this opportunity fully. The younger generation in Britain is simply not recognizing the importance of having more than one language to assist their employment development for the future. I would urge

all 14 year old pupils considering their options at the moment, to choose a language as one of these options. As a local employer, we would like to nurture language talent to increase young people's employability in the competitive international jobs market."

Chris Everall, RLN WM manager, said: "Although businesses in the West Midlands are increasingly seeking staff with language skills to succeed in international markets, persuading young people to study languages can be a challenge. Early exposure to practical experience of using languages at work is vital to their learning process and can make languages fun, relevant – and intrinsic to their career path.

"Bosses like Dean are a powerful advocate of language learning and place it in a relevant and inspiring context. We would encourage other organisations in the region to take on an equally pro-active role."





Image information:

(Redditch 0701) Dean Attwell, explains the importance of language skills within the Oakland operation to students.

(Redditch 1251) Dean Attwell (centre) and Peter Vaughan (left) discuss opportunities within Oakland's operation.

Editor' note: 'Oakland's MD, Dean Attwell is a first rate media speaker, having excellent experience with the local/national media and is available for interview.

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