

## NEWS RELEASE

### **Redditch managers return to classrooms to promote languages**

Managers from Redditch-based storage and logistics company, Oakland International Ltd, returned to the classroom recently to promote the importance of language skills.

Pete Vaughan, Edith Hurst Earle and Mary Whitehead visited Redditch's Arrow Vale Community High School and St Augustine's Catholic High School to deliver language-based presentations and activities to 13 and 14 year-olds.

The sessions gave students an insight into the job roles and salaries available to those with languages and explained the social and business advantages of being able to speak and understand another language.

This is the third year running that the Oakland team have visited St Augustine's - their first visit contributed to doubling uptake of GCSE French - and it is hoped this continued engagement with business can persuade students at both schools to continue with their language learning.



This project is part of the Business Language Champions programme, which is co-ordinated by Regional Language Network (RLN) West Midlands. 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 presentations were well received and enjoyed by all, as Sarah Noble, head of languages at Arrow Vale, said:

"The visit from Oakland coincided with options evening and youngsters considered their choices seriously, having listened avidly to Edith and Mary. We are really grateful to the Oakland employees for giving up their time to come and speak to us."

Chris Marples, head of languages at St Augustine's echoed these sentiments:

'Students were very enthusiastic to learn about the structure of a company and how they would fit into that structure, particularly with a foreign language. Since the visit, several students, who had been uncertain about choosing a language for Year 10, asked if they could choose French or German.'

Pete Vaughan, business development manager at Oakland, was delighted with the response from students, he said:

“I enjoy working on this project each year and had excellent support from my colleagues Mary and Edith, which has helped me develop our relationship with the two schools. Pupils were enthusiastic and I hope the programme has made them think about their GCSE options. It is increasingly important for young people to have a range of abilities and languages are now an important and valuable skill when seeking employment.”

Frances Pallett, business language champions project manager, added:

“At a time when many companies are busy dealing with the downturn in industry it is fantastic to see Oakland continuing to support these schools and doing their bit to inspire the next generation of international business people.”



Oakland International Ltd requires staff with language skills to work with manufacturers and retailers worldwide.

Arrow Vale High School, a specialist sports college, is a mixed 13-18 comprehensive in eastern Redditch. The school has 900 students, with a sixth form of 150 and teaches French.

St Augustine’s Catholic High School, in Redditch, Worcestershire provides a Christ-centred learning community for 13 to 18 year-olds.

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.

ENDS

Image 1: Pete Vaughan with pupils from St Augustine’s Catholic High School.

Image 2: Edith Hurst-Earle with pupils from Arrow Vale Community High 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. For further information on Regional Language Network West Midlands visit [www.rln-westmidlands.com](http://www.rln-westmidlands.com).

For more information on Oakland International please visit <http://www.oakland-international.com>