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Metals Academy scoops industry/education awards

The metals industry has been rewarded for the top-quality liaison work it carries out in the West Midlands, one of the industry's main centres of activity. Metals Academy partners scooped three awards at the Sandwell Education Business Partnership (EBP) 'Showcase Awards' presented at Birmingham's Botanical Gardens on 23 March. The awards mark excellence in school-industry links which have demonstrated a real impact on student learning.

The Metals Academy won the 'Quality in Partnerships' award for its work with specialist Business and Enterprise School, St Michaels CE High School. The School also nominated Metsec plc to win the 'Quality in Work Experience Placements' award, arranged through the Metals Academy. Lucky St Michaels student, Michael Harris, 16, picked up a cheque for £200 generously donated by engineering company, Faber Maunsell, to reward the most promising work experience student.

Metsec and St Michaels are partners in the Metals Academy Black Country Industry/Schools Partnership Agreement signed up to over three years by six local metals companies and four schools, with support from Sandwell EBP and Sandwell Local Education Authority. The partnership provides the Metals Academy Work Experience Programme, arranges company visits for students and teachers, offers teacher placements and makes available Metals Academy ambassadors – specially trained apprentices who help with practical projects in schools and talk to students about their chosen careers.


Praising the work of the partnership, Assistant Head of St Michaels, Suresh Singh, said: "We're delighted to be working with business and very passionate about the Metals Academy partnership which allows teachers and students to go on work placements in metals companies and brings experience into the classroom. The strength lies in the sustainability and making the commitment. We have a particularly strong relationship with Metsec. Ambassadors from the company come in to set up design and manufacturing projects every week and I know if I wanted to I could just pick up the phone to the MD or training manager and they would help out in any way they possibly could."


Michael Harris undertook work experience at partner company, William King Ltd, and went on to complete a two-week programme at Metsec. “I enjoyed participating in the Metals Academy Programme and working in the companies. At Metsec I worked both in the office, completing administration type work, and on the shopfloor which included monitoring production lines. I spent a week in transport which involved invoicing, reviewing stock lists, advice notes and loading lists. I also attended production meetings which discussed the progress of the company. When working on the shopfloor, I monitored the loading bays and the finished products. I was placed as a contracts engineer and worked with the manufacturing director and with wages,” he said. “It was a different experience and gave me a good feel for all the departments in a large company and what it’s like to work there. Although I was slightly nervous on my first day, all my colleagues were friendly and approachable and treated me well. I got on with everyone there.”

The work experience enhanced Michael’s team-working skills, boosted his confidence and helped him decide on a career in engineering, he said. “I’m going to continue in further education at college and broaden my knowledge. Then I’d like to apply to Metsec for an apprenticeship when I’m 18.”

It is a decision that Metsec welcomes. “I would strongly suggest Michael applies for an apprenticeship, allowing him to continue his education while gaining practical experience,” said Metsec Manufacturing Director, David Briars. “His enthusiastic and mature approach allowed him to become part of the department even in the short time he was with us, with managers trusting him to complete tasks without having to check his work. In all the areas that Michael came into contact with Metsec personnel they had nothing but praise and admiration for him. Michael is a credit to his school, his parents and himself and we are sure he will go on to be successful.”

Ends

Photograph PR – 67EEa available on request	
Michael Harris and fellow student, Nadia Attwell, try their hand at practical work at Metsec	

Photograph PR – 67EEb available on request	
Michael Harris and fellow student, Nadia Attwell, learn about steel structures from Metsec’s John Couldwell	

Media contact:

Elaine Essery, tel: 01229 716129, email: elaine.essery@bbh.myzen.co.uk

Notes to Editors:

1. MetSkill is the strategic skills body for the UK metals industry and is part of SEMTA - the Sector Skills Council for Science, Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies.
2. The Metals Academy works with schools and employers, offering a value added service to employers with additional training, social and networking opportunities for apprentices. It advises young people on career opportunities, helps match applicants to vacancies and oversees the training of apprentices to ensure the highest quality standards are upheld.