

Leith Academy Speed Careers Events

What are they?

Leith Academy has had good attendance at Parent Council meetings but limited active parental engagement around the school. In order to increase parental input and support the positive destinations agenda for students, we invented a 'Speed Careers Event' to bring parents and friends of the school in to share information and experiences of their careers with students, based on a 'speed dating' concept.

How do they work?

13-15 adults commit to the 2-hour after-school event. Each adult sits at a table with props and information about their career. Students (40 – 50 in number) divide themselves into small groups and sit at the tables to fire questions at, and listen to, the adults. Every 4 minutes a hand bell rings and they rush on to the next table. Every student visits every table – some will find out about careers they never knew existed. The speed element creates a buzz and gives momentum to the event.



Three very successful Speed Careers events have been held in the past two years. The best timing and age group has been found to be a November event, inviting S4 students to participate.

What sort of careers are represented?

Leith Academy and its local community is lucky to comprise a wide range of careers and the following have been represented:

Radiographer; Chef; Architect; Tax Accountant; Midwife; Scottish Parliament Clerk; Councillor; Geologist; Photographer; NHS Healthcare Scientist; Solicitor; Hairdresser; Product Manager; Publisher; Charity Worker; Beautician; Design Engineer; Radiation Inspector; Social Worker; Actuary; Chemist; Sign Language Interpreter; Advertising Executive; Solicitor.

What else happens at Speed Careers?



Straight after school, before the event begins, there is time for the students to get onto the 'My World of Work' website in the IT Suite – they might look up some of the careers they'll be hearing about later, or look at other careers that interest them. Representatives from LEAPS, SDS and a Modern Apprenticeship Scheme are on hand to give assistance and qualifications information.

A further element has been introduced, whereby after the speed element there is time for students to have more in-depth conversations with any parents whose careers have particularly interested them.

After the event, parents are invited to the Staff Room for a reviving cup of tea and informal chat.

What do students think of the events?

What do they enjoy?

- 'meeting new people'
- 'learning about different jobs'
- 'speaking with someone from a career that I'm interested in'



What do they learn?

- 'do what you're good at'
- 'there are lots of kinds of social work'
- 'it's not all about the money'
- 'be enthusiastic'
- 'you have to work hard at school to be where you want'
- 'there are many more jobs than I thought'
- 'what a radiographer is'
- 'to be open about your jobs'.

What do the adults involved think?

'The pupils were all really engaged and seemed to be enthusiastic about taking part. The format was very relaxed and I really hope that the pupils got something from it, even if it was just in terms of meeting some new people and having the type of conversation with working folk that they might not otherwise have had. I should also say how lucky everyone is to have such a great school to attend. It is miles better in terms of facilities than my old high school. I am sure that many would be envious of Leith Academy.'

'This lets my daughter see that I have a life beyond being a mum'.

'I'd say having some sort of time limit was good to make things move along, and it forced the students to speak to everyone. Perhaps identifying those students who were genuinely interested in your profession and giving them an extra ten minutes at the end would have been useful? Or else arranging a separate time with them and the careers advisor?'

'We are just people they see around Leith - their friends' parents - it must help make their career ideas seem more realistic.'

'I just wanted to say what a privilege it was to take part in this event. I thoroughly enjoyed doing it and thought the young people were great. I would definitely take part again if I were to be asked!'



...and the Head Teacher?

'This is a really important event for the school. Quite apart from focusing on the current national initiatives on "employability" and links with local businesses, etc., it is really good to welcome parents and friends of the school into the building to make a really positive and productive contribution to our pupils' experiences.' - Jack Simpson

Next Speed Careers Event: Tuesday 1 November 2016

To get involved, contact: leithparentcouncil@gmail.com