

## BUSINESS LANGUAGE CHAMPIONS

a project supported by the DCSF through CILT

Business Language Champion:  
Marshalls PLC, Huddersfield

Business Language Champion Education Partner:  
St Catherine's Catholic High School, Halifax



## Building Languages

Following initial contact and collaboration for the Business Language Champions project in April 2007, Marshalls plc and St Catherine's Catholic High School planned for a student visit to the company to take place in February 2008.



As part of Y9 options and as an enterprise project, a group of 10 gifted and talented pupils visited Marshalls to meet Paul Stark, the Overseas Marketing Manager and Jonathan Gadd, the Regional Marketing Manager to investigate how they used languages in their day to day business.

The visit lasted about three quarters of an hour. Paul introduced the students to Marshalls and explained their core business, their overseas markets and showed them examples of the kinds of enquiries in French he has to deal with. The pupils enjoyed trying to translate the documents to work out the customers' requests.

The pupils then split into smaller groups and interviewed either Paul or Jonathan to find out more about their work, the languages they used, the qualities they needed for their jobs and crucially whether they enjoyed their work.

Paul and Jonathan stressed how important languages are to their company and how useful a skill speaking a language was.

The pupils also received a gift of a mug and a pen with which they were really thrilled. The group returned to school really enthused by their experience and they all said how the visit had made them think more carefully about their choices and that they had never realised how important languages were beyond school.

The group then prepared PowerPoint presentations on their trip and gave a short talk to their classes about their visit and why languages are important in the world of work/ business.

They were very enthusiastic ambassadors for languages and the classes responded very positively.

*“The visit was very positive and contributed to school's enterprise activities as well as being beneficial to MFL. It also raised the profile of MFL with other subject staff and senior management as well other Year groups when they saw the display that went up based on the pupils' presentations. The activity will take place again next year, perhaps with a related project that the returning students can lead.*”

*From our own survey /evaluation of the Marshalls project, there is a definite increase in numbers, e.g last year only 15 students from the 2 top sets took MFL GCSE; this year the figure will be 26. There also seem to be about a third more from the lower groups. ....so much healthier!”*

Lynda Whitaker, Head of MFL at St Catherine's.