

Workplace environment created within school



ONE FOR THE FUTURE: The Centre of Excellence at Budmouth College and, below, Budmouth Year 13 student Natalie Atkinson, left, with Year 11 students Kelly Gibbs-Barton, Sarah Timperon, Rowan Hedley and Lucy Gosling
JG7336/F12575

THAT'S EXCELLENT

BY JOANNA DAVIS

A CENTRE of excellence to prepare youngsters for the workplace was unveiled in Weymouth.

Representatives from local companies were shown around the £600,000 facility at Budmouth College by groups of students as it was officially launched.

Many of the companies have contributed to the Weymouth centre, which is the first of its kind in the country.

The centre has been created to enhance the personal development of students and help them to prepare for employment.

Students from across the school will use the learning space, which consists of nine different zones where different work skills can be developed.

Marcel Ciantar, who will be overseeing the centre, said it had been developed as a response to criticism claiming that students are ill-prepared for the workplace.

He said: "Our role is to bridge the gap between the classroom and professionalism."

"When they come through the door, I say 'you have left the school



behind and we are now colleagues'. "We will have companies coming in and working with them from every industry."

The centre will be mostly used by sixth formers between lessons.

The zones have different colours and help students to develop ideas, discuss things in groups and use technology to do research.

A 'hard graft' area has been set up where students can work without interruption.

Some 36 students have become associate interns and are taking turns at running the reception.

Student Brianna Fairbank, 17, said: "I've gained so many professional skills since using the centre. Some students wouldn't be

able to have those skills otherwise to help prepare them for going to university and going to work."

Mr Ciantar will be talking about the centre at a Schools Network Conference he is attending in Warwick.

He said: "This centre is unique. We are trusting the students to be employees and to turn up for work when it is their turn to work on the reception."

"We are giving them a huge amount of responsibility."

"I'd like the Education Secretary to come here and see what we're doing. We're identifying what students want to improve on."

■ joanna.davis@dorsetecho.co.uk

NEWS IN BRIEF

Woman cut free after cars crash

BERE REGIS: Firefighters rescued a woman who was trapped after two vehicles collided on the A31.

Crews from Poole and Blandford were alerted by police to Almer, east of Bere Regis, to release a casualty from one of the vehicles yesterday afternoon.

A fire service spokeswoman said: "Crews used hydraulic rescue kit to remove the roof of a vehicle."

"The woman was released and conveyed to hospital by ambulance."

Delays to Miss Dorset crowning

WEYMOUTH: Miss Dorset 2012 will have to wait another month to be crowned after the finals were pushed back to allow more time for fundraising.

The 28 Miss Dorset finalists will now meet on April 21 at Banus nightclub.

Organisers have given contestants more time to raise money for the Miss World Beauty with a Purpose Foundation which supports disadvantaged children.

The winner will go on to compete in the finals of Miss England with the chance of becoming Miss World.

Details: missengland.info/regionals/dorset

Prison to host volunteering day

PORTLAND: A volunteers' day will be held at the Verne Prison on March 13.

It will take place between 10am and 4pm at the Jailhouse Cafe near the main prison entrance.

People can find out more about volunteering in the area and opportunities linked to the prison. Local groups are invited to have a free stand.

Call Michelle Preston on 01305 825169 or email michelle.preston@hmps.gsi.gov.uk

Drax: 'Copter battle not over

THE fight to save the Portland Coastguard service is not over for MP Richard Drax, who has written to the Transport Secretary over the decision to axe it.

As reported in the Echo, MP Justine Greening dealt a devastating blow to Dorset when she wrote to Mr Drax confirming that the search and rescue service contract would not be renewed in 2017.

Miss Greening said after reading

objections to the plans: "I remain convinced that the closure of Portland will not increase the overall risk of loss of life in the UK search and rescue region."

In response, South Dorset MP Richard Drax has asked for a copy of 'the analysis and methodology, plus the data and assumptions' that led to the decision.

He wrote: "You cannot fly a helicopter further, for longer, for free."

**CLOSING DOWN
PINE AND OAK SALE**
SUPERB GENUINE BARGAINS ON PINE & OAK



**EVERYTHING
MUST GO**

UNBEATABLE BARGAINS
COME AND PAY US A VISIT

TREHAVEN FURNISHERS

1593 Wimborne Road,
Kinson. BH10 7BB