

- **School/College/Business:** The Bridge School, Ipswich and Suffolk County Council
- **Topic:** SEND pupils spend a day working with Suffolk County Council
- **Gatsby Benchmark(s):** 6



The Bridge School is a Special Educational Needs and Disability school. Due to the nature of the learners, finding work placements and experiences had been proving a difficulty for the school.

Josie Finch, Enterprise Coordinator, working with the Skills team at Suffolk County Council put together a morning's worth of activities and interactions with various staff and departments to create a placement where the needs of these complex learners could be met. This way they could create a bespoke offer for the school to start to widen the learners' experiences of workplaces. The first task for the students, after a quick photo, was how to navigate the revolving doors at Endeavour House. Students were then met by Karen Cross, the new Enterprise Adviser for the school, Jasmin Joolia and Beverley Ives from the Skills team, who along with Josie were their guides and support for the visit.

The rest of the day consisted of various activities and experiences including signing in at reception, meeting a local councillor, reading the canteen menu, travelling in the lift to various floors, talking with over 10 different staff members, taking over the desks in the open plan office, seeing Ipswich Town Football Club from above, discovering what happens to the confidential paperwork, talking to HR and a special visit to the IT help desk. What proved most difficult was gauging interest and understanding the feedback from the nonverbal learners.

“It was interesting to meet with the students and to discover the range of abilities within the group. It was good to keep the activities really short, as attentions were hard to keep” commented Karen. Feedback from SCC staff hosting the event was positive with the team now working with the Enterprise Adviser Network to create resources to make the next visit even more engaging. The school felt the visit went really well and cannot wait to return; they have even been invited back to host one of their student council meetings in the council chamber. Emma Byford, Careers Lead, was ecstatic and cannot wait to return, “What a great morning we had! Thanks ever so much, it was a really well thought-out agenda and the children really responded to it”

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