

Developing Work & Life Skills at LVS Hassocks Café

CASE STUDY: LVS HAS SOCKS

FEBRUARY 2022



INDEPENDENT
SCHOOLS
ASSOCIATION

Background to the School

LVS Hassocks is a multi-award-winning independent school that is owned and managed by the Licensed Trade Charity which has been supporting workers in the licensed trade for over 220 years. The school is for young people aged 11 to 19 years with a diagnosis of autism, and offers a specialist curriculum that recognises each person as an individual, tailoring learning plans to suit. Children are supported in their individual journey to realise their full potential in a culture of mutual respect and close links with local colleges, schools and alternative provisions.

The school recognises that those with autism struggle to get meaningful employment. Only 15% of adults with autism are in full-time employment; only 9% are in part-time employment, with 53% of adults with autism commenting that they want help to find work, but only 10% are getting the support they need. The overwhelming philosophy of the school is to ensure that students are equipped for their future lives and essential to this is ensuring that students have strong employment prospects. This attitude permeates all aspects of the students' experiences, from the core curriculum, collaboration between the teaching and therapy teams, the adaptive curriculum, transition, and relevant and accessible work experience opportunities.

All staff have an inclusive, ambitious, and aspirational vision for the school. The Principal, Jen Weeks, has led enormous change in the school over the past years and has been supported by an enthusiastic and motivated team.

LVS Hassocks is proud to have won the National ISA Award for Outstanding Provision of Learning Support for 2020 and an award in the Children with Disabilities category of the 2020 National Children & Young People Awards. From 2021, LVS Hassocks holds SLEEP Right Accreditation, the Level 4 Royal Horticultural Schools Gardening Award, the Gold Level SMSC Award and is now recognised as an IQM Centre of Excellence after being honoured with the Inclusion Quality Mark Award.



LVS Hassocks



www.lvs-hassocks.org.uk

AIMS

LVS Hassocks focuses on three main areas of development:

- Learning
- Achieving
- Growing

The school encourages students to become healthy, empowered and included adults who participate in society.

This project was set up to give students opportunities to develop confidence and independence while they practice social interaction and communication, something most students with a diagnosis of autism find particularly difficult.

The project also aims to introduce students to business skills that will help them build a CV and support their ambitions to sustain work and independence in the future and to develop life skills like managing money and budgeting.

The Oast Café provides, amongst other great benefits, a perfect forum for students to practice a variety of skills from front-of-house hospitality and social skills to developing money handling skills and calculations. Students also supported the setup of the café by decorating and upcycling items. The horticulture area adds another dimension to the school's diverse offering.

ACTIONS

We opened the Café in 2019 for one day a week, on a Friday, with the aim to provide onsite work experience for our students. It also provided a chance for our community (both internally and externally) to get to know each other better, putting in to place opportunities for the development of social and communication skills. This gave our students participating in the project an understanding of how a small business operates, and importantly how it has to follow rules and laws. This is great first-hand experience that they love to be a part of.

The finances raised each week through sales go back into supporting the activities the students do, as well as purchasing stock from our catering suppliers Sodexo. Students are responsible for cashing up at the end of each Friday.

Using our onsite caterers to help provide the cakes and savoury snacks means that students can directly influence the choices of food each week and link back with our Catering Manager. This also increases their knowledge, experience and expertise beyond the café itself.

Each tutor group, on rotation runs the café and are responsible for serving customers and cleaning up afterwards. The cleaning is then checked over by our Housekeeping Manager, Iveta Stolcere.

The café is promoted through our Facebook page, leaflet drops and is well supported by our parent community as it gives them an opportunity to meet up with other parents.

For this to be successful there had to be key people to lead the project. This role went to Jen Weeks, our Principal and Jo Smith - who oversee the running of the café each Friday.



LVS Hassocks

ISA
INDEPENDENT
SCHOOLS
ASSOCIATION





OUTCOMES

The students who work on this project have grown in confidence and have developed many skills. Some of which our Sixth Form students put in to practice when they completed their Level 1 Barista training at Ascot Racecourse in November 2021. Other students have participated in work experience at the local village shop which also makes tea/coffee on site for passing trade.

Students also have a practical way of exploring functional maths skills and understanding money and the value of things, which is then helping them transfer this learning back into their academic curriculum.

We believe that inviting people from the local community to buy their tea, coffee and cake will generate more opportunities for our students to experience working in the local area, as well as raise the profile and understanding of the neurodiverse individual.



NEXT STEPS

Plans for the future for LVS Hassocks' Café include opening it up to even more people from the community for special events and hosting of groups such as the local Age UK group. Also, serving cream teas. Plans that aim to familiarise our students with working to a specific brief.

In addition, using the café to showcase the artwork and the produce from our horticulture area (with the option to purchase the latter – vegetables and flowers).

As our cohorts differ from one year to the next we are considering how we can incorporate more hospitality and catering qualifications into our curriculum to run alongside our current offer of Home Cooking BTEC.

Contact: Jen Weeks, Principal: Jen.weeks@lvs-hassocks.org.uk