

Success story

Students ‘get a real opportunity to acquire skills likely to open doors’, say senior teachers

Abbeyfield School finds vision2learn online learning materials inspire staff and learners across Years 10 & 11

“I think one of the benefits we’ve noticed with vision2learn is the way students can see results, and success, quickly,” says Janet Florey, Deputy Head of Abbeyfield School, Northampton.

“Our intake is diverse. Some of our students arrive midway through KS4, and some move on somewhere else within a short time. We can give them something meaningful and worthwhile – they all get a real opportunity to acquire core skills, including skills likely to open doors for them, in school, at college and university, in work and in their future lives.”

Vision2learn for schools is part of a range of strategies used by Abbeyfield to enhance success. Current activities include a programme where staff members involved in mentoring assess each of their mentees for their attitude to learning, with a view to identifying students who are at risk of becoming disengaged but who have yet to show obvious signs in performance or behaviour. *“This is to help us intervene before a problem becomes apparent,”* explains Janet Florey. *“We’re identifying a cohort who will benefit from some very focused attention, and the Learning to Learn suite of mini-resources fits this group of students very well.”*

Learning to Learn resources are ‘performance boosters’, already used by a number of learners at Abbeyfield, with excellent feedback from staff and students.



vision2learn for schools at Abbeyfield School – read our case studies on www.vision2learnforschools.com

“Take the resource Quit or Succeed,” says Abby Tobutt, Foundation Learning Co-ordinator. “It gets the students to ask sometimes quite searching questions of themselves, and it gives them a good basis for discussion with a teacher. This and the other resources help a learner to get an overview of their own thought processes. We’re convinced this is an effective support for staff-student relationships. We also use vision2learn for school’s Maths and English resources throughout years 10 and 11 – actually, we’ve discovered these are also very handy on occasions when a student has been internally excluded, or is being required to work on their own for some other reason. They can log in, and always find something worthwhile and constructive to do.”

Vision2learn makes the most of its online appeal, too. *“We’re also aware that any ICT-based learning has a kudos with young people – much more so than paper. It feels a mature way for them to learn, and they can use it independently and in private, even in class. Some students hate having the teacher stand over them, looking over their shoulder. There’s no need for that, as I can be at the front of the class with my PC, and I can be called on for help onscreen, by someone who might have difficulties asking for it in front of the rest of the students.”*

The humour in the graphics and the quick progression through the onscreen pages is a further strength. *“I really enjoy learning like this,”* says 14-year-old Demi Rixon, one of Abbeyfield’s Year 10



vision2learn for schools at Abbeyfield School

Gifted and Talented students. She's following the Level 2 Equality and Diversity programme. *"I found it helped me understand what diversity actually means in a way I didn't really appreciate before."* Demi is part of a group following this programme in the Key Life Skills lessons, as part of a pilot to test the viability of it for the whole of Years 10 and 11. Nathan Dawson, 15, part of the same pilot, agrees. *"It relates to what we're going to need for work and college after school – and for school life now, in fact."*

Newcomers to the school Saira Begum, 15, Year 11, and Year 12 student Zilvinas Buzinskas aged 17, recently arrived with little English from Lithuania, have both enrolled on vision2learn for schools' programmes, where the flexibility of the materials means work can begin at any time. Saira's options from her former school did not 'fit' with what Abbeyfield could offer, so she presented a curriculum challenge. Equality and Diversity has been a useful addition. *"It's helpful to me, I think, as I plan to study law after school, and knowledge of different cultures gives me some good background."* Zilvinas, studying BTEC WorkSkills Level 2, has found the programme has supported his growing confidence in English: *"I'm finding it easier now – and the teacher's been able to help me when I've had problems."*

Online learning for parents too

Parents and other adults are signing up through Abbeyfield to study on vision2learn courses. There's free enrolment for eligible adult learners on a choice of four Level 1 or Level 2 courses, in IT, business and administration, and equality and diversity. Parent learners are supported by online tutors organised by vision2learn too.

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Abby Tobutt says the school has been delighted with the positive response to this opportunity. *"We publicised it with a page in the newsletter, put it on the website and sent the word round at a prospective parents' evening, and we've had a lot of enquiries plus a bunch of firm signings. As a school, we see it as a further link with the community, and it's a way that parents can share some of the learning experience with their children. It's a good way to demonstrate that we're interested in the well-being of students, their families and the local area."*

Abbeyfield School

Abbeyfield School, formerly known as Mereway Community College, is an 11–18 comprehensive school, a couple of miles from the centre of Northampton. There are around 1200 students enrolled at the school, of whom about 160 are in the sixth form. Abbeyfield gained Specialist College status in the Performing Arts in September 2005, and this status was redesignated in 2010.

In 2010, Ofsted inspectors described the school as 'happy and improving' after emerging from what they termed a 'period of great turbulence'.

Outstanding Centre award

Vision2learn for schools presented Abbeyfield with the prestigious Outstanding Centre award, given to centres that show exceptional creativity and success with the vision2learn for schools materials. Says Foundation Learning Co-ordinator Abby Tobutt, *"I think we have brought something new to the way we use the programmes, including plans to roll out their use to a wider range of students."*

Contact us

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